



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Saving a National Treasure

FACT SHEET

October 2015

AGRICULTURE: WE'RE HALF WAY THERE

Eavers Horseshoeing



Jeremy "Cotton" Eavers has been shoeing horses since 2001.

Grottoes, VA: Jeremy "Cotton" Eavers of Eavers Horseshoeing has some key advice for horse owners. "Keep your horses out of streams and muddy places and you will save a lot of money," he explains. "Horse hooves are like paper plates. If you leave them in water too long the tissue becomes soft and they crack, which creates openings for infection. It also makes it very easy to lose shoes."

Eavers has been shoeing horses since 2001 throughout Virginia, Florida, West Virginia, and Maryland. He also

owns Triple Time Performance Horses, a business that buys horses and trains them to sort and pen cattle.

Eavers notes that prolonged exposure to wet conditions can cause lameness in horses and is the leading cause for horses losing their shoes. "Horse owners can save themselves a lot of money and save their farrier a lot of time by keeping their animals out of wet areas," he stresses. "It will also improve the health of our streams."

Fencing livestock out of streams is also one of the most economical and efficient ways to improve the health of our waterways. Horses and other livestock allowed in streams and wet areas pollute the water by trampling the stream banks. This dislodges soil, which suffocates a delicate aquatic ecosystem. Livestock also defecate and urinate in streams, which adds nutrients and pathogens to the water.

In Virginia at least two programs exist to help farmers looking to fence horses out of streams. The programs provide technical and financial assistance for fences, watering facilities, stream crossings, and stream buffer practices. Local U.S. Department of Agriculture and Soil and Water Conservation District offices have information about eligibility requirements and program assistance, which can vary by field office.

Keeping livestock out of streams has proven herd health benefits. It is also a clear sign to downstream neighbors and other community members of your ethics and environmental stewardship.

Try these options to keep cattle healthy by keeping them out of streams:

- Off-stream watering systems
- Stream fencing
- Stream crossings
- Buffer strips
- Rotational Grazing

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Farm Service Agency (FSA), and the state agricultural best management cost-share programs can help cover expenses for certain livestock stream exclusion projects that are built to specification.

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This is one in a series of articles about farmers who have implemented conservation practices to improve farm operations and water quality in nearby streams, demonstrating how agriculture has achieved half of the nutrient reductions necessary to clean up local streams and the Chesapeake Bay.

The author, Robert Whitescarver, lives in Swoope, Virginia, and can be contacted at bobby.whitescarver@gettingmoreontheground.com.

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