

Drum Beat

Hay Nets, Why didn't I think of that!

By Jim Elliott

I LIKE HORSES
BETTER THAN
MOST PEOPLE,
JOHN WAYNE



always said we had the happiest horses in the world. Now they are even happier.

One of our round bales weighs 575

pounds. They also spend more time outside which means less mucking.

Every Horse should eat this way. In about two weeks we will put the nets away, and open up the big fields. Will bring the nets out again in November after the hay barns are full. We have almost 50 horses here. In the last six months we have spent about \$1100 for hay nets. Don't really know how long they last. If a strand breaks, you just repair it with baling twine. I think baling twine is tougher than the net material itself. My best guess is, we have saved at least \$5,000 in wasted hay. Probably at least 1000 hours in my and volunteers time. We are probably going to market the new type of net which is so easy to change.

One thing -- Hay nets are not recommended for horses who have shoes on. A shoe can catch in the netting, and that's not good. We haven't had one instance where a horse got injured with this process.

I would think they would be good for all those with the sandy soil. We started in September, in the Pacific Northwest with the nets. Small ones for a flake or two, and big ones for the round bales we put in the fields. Here is what we have noticed in six months. No colics. Not even mild ones. Thin horses put on weight, and most fat ones loose weight. Less injuries related to food aggression. Less injuries = less vet bills. Horses are not standing around begging for food anymore. They are much quieter and content now. You can walk out in the field and are not mobbed. They have food in front of them 24 hours a day. Takes them a long time to eat it. Very much like natural grazing. Way, way less waste. Basically none. Our vet says its better for their internal organs, especially their liver. In winters past we have put blankets on all the TBs and older horses during the winter. This winter, not one. Visitors come out who haven't been here for awhile and after walking around a little they ask what is different, as they sense something but don't know what it is. Its the horses. They are more relaxed than before. They are happier than before. I've

pounds. One bale will feed about 20 horses a day. Especially when most of them are Drums, or Drafts. Figure that's about ten bales. We have devised a way to put the nets over the bales very quickly. Takes about five minutes start to finish. Rain doesn't effect it much. Have a couple of large water troughs we put them in during heavy rain, plus we set them under a Douglas Fir tree. Like a big umbrella. A wooden box will work that is about two feet high. The horses hardly contact it. They just lean over it and eat. I would guess it provides me about an hour and a half extra time a day. Since the food is in front of the horses 24 hours a day, we only feed



Webmaster
Now that the IDHA has a new website, we are looking for a webmaster to make it a live and vibrant site by continuing on with updates twice a month. A good working knowledge of html coding or Word Press would be a plus. Please contact Rebecca at admin@drumhorseassociation.com if you can help.