

Flood and your Horse Property

Handling Flooded Soils General Guidelines

- Open all drainage ditches or create them if necessary.
- Remove debris from fields and pastures. Look carefully for partially hidden objects that could injure livestock or damage machinery.
- Check fences carefully.
- To prevent severe soil compacting, avoid running trucks and heavy farm equipment over wet soils. Most soils are not dry enough for traffic or cultivation until the top 5 or 6 inches crumble, rather than slick over or pack.
- Encourage the growth of cover crops. Any type of plant growth is effective in drying waterlogged soils. It is usually not necessary to remove silt deposits. The fertility level of flooded soils will probably change over a period of time.
- Do not guess at requirements. Take soil samples to determine new fertility levels. Follow recommendations. Allow for nutrients supplied by applied animal manures. When sampling silted fields, make sure the samples represent the soil mix that will exist after deposited silt is mixed with the original topsoil.
- Avoid deep tillage or subsoiling unless advised by an agronomist. Deep tillage or subsoiling is rarely beneficial and could be harmful.

The Year After the Flood

The flood may also have deposited soil that is different in texture, pH and organic matter content.

The new soil may have herbicide residues from the previous season's application if the flood deposits mainly come from an adjacent field or treated roadside. These residues are unlikely to have too much affect because deposits are usually very diluted and leached. If you suspect problems you should contact your local PI&F office.



If doing a soil test take several soil samples from the flooded area. If plants in the flooded soil are normal and appear to grow as well as those in other soil, indications are strong that it is safe. If plant growth in the flooded soil is abnormal, have an agricultural professional determine if the symptoms are related to possible herbicide residues in the soil or to other causes, such as nutrient deficiencies or diseases.

Be alert for new weed problems the year after the flood. Some weeds may have germinated after you made an assessment of weeds during the flood year. Others may have remained dormant until this season.

