



Historically the stable's rates are adjusted the first of each year to reflect the cost increases that have transpired during the prior year. For the first time there will be a slight reduction for the average horse bill due to a drop in alfalfa prices since the highs of last July. Effective as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, rates for the various feeds are as follows:

Feed Type	Quarter 2.5-3 lbs.	Half 5-6 lbs.	Full 9-10 lbs
Alfalfa	\$21	\$29	\$45
Bermuda	\$21	\$29	\$45
Cubes	N/A	\$33 3.5 lbs.	\$51 7 lbs.
Orchard	\$28	\$44	\$71
Timothy	\$33	\$54	\$87
Owner's Feed	\$8	\$8	\$8

Over that last few years we have worked hard to improve our feed program. With this year's addition of the scales, the portions have become very accurate. This accuracy allows us to price for the exact amount of feed delivered plus a small labor cost for each feed.

Historically cubes have not reflected their true cost because it was believed that they reduced the amount of waste that was generated. With less waste collected in the daily cleaning process, the expense of hauling was reduced. Since the composting has started, feed waste isn't such an issue. In 2010, the subsidy will therefore be eliminated and cubes would be priced based on their true cost. While baled alfalfa prices have come down, cubes prices have remained high. The proposed cube rate results in a substantial jump as compared to feeding baled alfalfa.

Demand for cubes has fallen steadily over the years, as it has become a less desirable feed. It is expected that if the new cube price becomes effective, there will be another large decrease in demand. With the lower demand for cubes, a trailer load would go bad before it is used up. For these reasons, cubes will be eliminated once the current trailer is emptied. We will finish the current trailer load at the subsidized rate, even if this runs into 2010. For those that fed cubes for a specific reason, we will be offering many alternatives through the store.

Other prices for pipe stalls, barns, tack sheds, feed boxes, and drystall rates will remain unchanged. Trailer parking will be increased by \$ 5 per month.

In the past when I was asked what I do for a living, I'd say that I was in the hotel business— except that my guests were horses. In many ways we perform the same routine functions as any hotel: we clean rooms, we provide basic room service and housekeeping (feeding and cleaning), hold a few conferences (clinics), have recreational facilities (arenas), and so on. Yet over the years, I've found hotels were places you slept, showered, and shaved, but then went somewhere else for the day's fun. Only to come back the next night and do the same. Lately I've changed my metaphor instead to running a resort. While resorts perform many of the basic functions of a hotel, they are destinations not nocturnal layovers.

Resorts are often known for their great food, and so to get the attention of Michelin and Expedia rating services, we need a fancier menu. To get that next star, we're working with a feed horse expert from Kruse Feed, and she (she has a name – Gina Anson) is designing specific feed recipes for horses with special needs such as, Cushings, laminitis, insulin resistance, senior, etc. The store will then be stocking the "ingredients" for the specific feed recipes that will maximize your horse's well being. There is also the option of having our staff feed these as a supplement / alternative to the baled feeds we currently offer.

While we still call it a store, it can also be considered a "kitchen" to prepare specific meals for special horses. A metal barrel or feed box will be placed in front of

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your stall, and at each feeding you designate, your horse's special meal will be served (as of yet we haven't chosen a linen). All the ingredients will be available though the store (kitchen). By mid-December the stable's web site (store page) will have these recipes for your perusal as well as some relevant articles help you understand the science behind the recipes.

Not to be a stepchild to the kitchen staff, our hospitality department has really stepped it up. They now carry Mallard Creek mini-flake shavings (far less is lost in the daily cleaning do to the smaller flake size), Cedarest, Quick T' Pick, Drystall and Woody pellets. Check the website [serranocreekranch.com](http://serranocreekranch.com) for more information. Remember that delivery is free!

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### *A few other items you may have been thinking about. . .*

As the new road in the back was being installed, every effort was made to reduce the slope by the arena gate to make easier to enter and exit. While the angle has been reduced by half, it still doesn't meet our high standards. Once the winterization is completed, the gate will be moved next to the tractor gate. This way entering and exiting the arena will be at a near zero grade. Until that time, you should consider using the tractor gate if you feel that it would be safer for you and your horse.

Over the last year many folks have started using tubs for watering their horses rather than the automatic waterers. As a result there has been an

increase in muck as a result of the water being dumped in the aisles to clean the tubs. As winter approaches, the muck factor will only increase exponentially. Also the stable's water bill rate structure has been revised, and this has caused a portion of our usage to be in the in the *grossly wasteful* category. This portion's rate is 10 times that of the normal rate. (As a note the arenas and landscaping are on a different water source and this usage is not part of the domestic water service that is for the horses). The culmination of all those dumpings add up to quite a bit of money per month.

We understand that the metal waterers don't deliver water fast enough for some horses, and hence the use of the tubs. In order to prevent the water dumping issue, the stable will now provide an alternative waterer that holds 4 gallons. This will easily provide enough water for those horses that are used to stopping at 7-11 for a Big Gulp with their meal. Also this will eliminate the need for dumping the gallons (and gallons) of dirty water that accumulates in the larger tubs. These waterers have a plug in the bottom that will allow for drainage / cleaning. The collected water can either be spread across your stall to dry, or disposed of by a tree, or washrack.

In an effort to be sensitive to the current economic conditions we've temporarily allowed

home made boxes to be placed by the corrals. Since that was started, it seems that feed box size inflation has taken off. At this rate in another year or two we'll have McMansion through the stable. These McMansion feedboxes clog up the aisle and give a rather chaotic appearance to the stable.

Going forward all additional feed boxes must match in size, proportion, materials, and colors of the stable's version. For those who are already here, you'll have one year (Jan 1, 2011) to modify your box to become compliant.