

DLT PHOTOGRAPHY
view todays images
www.dltphotography.com
tel: 0191 217 1800

April 2014 £2.60

also in digital format

equine

WIN!

*£160 Equisafety Hi-Vis
Northumberland County Tickets
TopSpec Senior Lite*

top turnout tips

vet advice
digestive upsets

how to
'think like a winner'

pristine paddocks
improve your grazing

competition news
plus m&m roundup

on test
*grooming products
performance supplements*

**northern stallion
showcase 6-page review**

Issue 106



farm
*'n' smallholding
section inside*



Derbyshire, Cheshire, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Co Durham, Cleveland, Tyne & Wear, Northumberland, Cumbria, Dumfries & Galloway, Borders, Berwickshire, Lanarkshire, Ayrshire, Lothians... and nationally in digital format



Over-seeding using a Logic LPH200 Pro Harrow with an EBC Electro-broadcaster fitted to the towing vehicle

Spring maintenance

After what has been a very wet and difficult winter season, spring has finally arrived and Logic Equestrian has put together a 'Top 10 Things To Do' list to help you plan your spring maintenance, starting with attention to grazing areas.

Grassland management is one of the most important yet probably the least attended to aspects of equine husbandry. Timing of work is very important to get the best out of each operation, which usually means needing equipment or a service at the same time as everyone else. Use of a good contractor or investing in a range of equipment, or sharing with others, are all worth considering. Investing in equipment that will meet your needs for most regular maintenance and the regular stableyard workload could be a sound move that has the potential to ultimately reduce the costs of horse ownership. The 'Top 10 Things To Do' list includes:

- Check soil status – deficiencies in lime or other elements
- Harrow – vigorous raking out of dead thatch.
- Over-seed – worn areas, tired swards.
- Heavy Roll – to level soft ground, consolidate re seeding.
- Fences – check gates and fences
- Water – clean and service troughs
- Fertiliser – apply adequate levels
- Spray – control weeds
- Grass cutting – topping to preserve grazing quality
- Paddock Cleaning – Poo picking

Let's start at the beginning with soil testing. The soil status needs to be known, so that if any particular element is lacking and requires correction, then this can be planned. Without this balance being managed correctly, results from further inputs will be poor. Any agricultural supplier can help with a testing service, which is vital for grass health.

Where livestock have been out-wintered there are probably

areas that are showing signs of wear and tear, with plunged or hay strewn areas choking any re-growth. These areas need a vigorous harrow to tear out dead thatch, level poached areas and generally stimulate plant growth. There is no better tool than the Logic Pro-harrow, featuring spring tines which can be adjusted from gentle to aggressive nature, for this work. Chain harrows can be used, but will require more passes to

achieve the same results. In areas where compaction and poor drainage are found, the Logic 'Terr-ator' produces slits in the soil to break up compaction, let air into the top soil to improve drainage, stimulate roots and grass growth.

Over-seeding can be carried out just on areas that have no grass, or more generally if swards are not growing well due to lack of vigour, or where the productive



The MSP120 Pro-Sweep is fitted with an optional tine bar to break up 'rained in' droppings

grass types have disappeared from the sward. It should be carried out when the ground temperature starts to improve – the same timeframe as when your lawn starts to grow. The Pro-Harrow will produce enough of a tilth to allow broadcasting of grass seed, which can be spread by hand, or for larger areas by an EBC electro-broadcaster mounted on the towing vehicle – the perfect combination. This should be followed with a roller, to consolidate the seeded area and of course the Logic Ballast Roller is ideal for this, as well as being useful in poached areas to level and re-instate ground.

Once the basics have been attended to, there will be time to check other paddock aspects before real grass growth starts. Fence boundaries and gates can be checked and repaired if necessary, water troughs cleaned out and checked for leaks or other problems.

Fertiliser spreading is essential for any grass that is required to perform, either for grazing or conservation as hay or haylage. The practice of spreading the muck heap onto grassland during winter is not possible on all yards, so nutrients need to be applied in the form of artificial fertiliser, usually from a bag. The type of fertiliser and quantity, will require advice from your agricultural supplier, but generally a 'balanced' formulation specifically for equine use will be best. Spreading can be carried out easily by use of the same EBC electro-broadcaster as used to sow seeds, if the area is not too large, say less than 5 acres (2Ha). For larger areas, consider the Logic LDS Ground Drive



The Pro Harrow is adjustable to suit different requirements

spreader range, which can be towed by any suitable vehicle as there is no PTO requirement from a tractor.

Once grass starts to grow, attention should be paid to weed control. There are generally two periods in the year when weeds are at their most susceptible, one is early when they are immature, the second is just before flowering. Where areas are known to have problems with nettles, thistles or docks for example, it can be very beneficial to spray early to knock them back and allow grasses to dominate. Logic's range of OBS On Board Sprayers are ideal for this and other general spraying, mounted on any suitable vehicle with a 12v output. They are

quick to set up and use, so are a really handy tool. They feature booms up to 3m wide with options of hand lance and hose reel. For larger areas the TS trailed range features capacities up to 600lt and boom widths up to 8m. As well as weed control the sprayer range is ideal for disinfectants and other cleaning products, which when used with the hose and hand-lance can quickly cover all surfaces of stable, loose box or trailer.

During the growing season, one of the objectives is to prevent grass plants from 'going to seed' so that they are continuously producing leaf shoots for grazing. Horses are rather selective grazers and will leave less palatable stalks if

present. Areas that are soiled by droppings aren't grazed, so tend to grow grasses that become coarse and these should be cut back to allow finer grasses to flourish. Regular grass topping is the easiest way to do this and also helps to reduce the weed burden by preventing seeding. Logic's range of trailed mowers is perfect for a quick trim, either using a 3 bladed Rotary Mower on more level, finer swarded paddocks, or the more robust Flail Mower for rougher coarser grasses. Interestingly, the constant use of a Logic Flail Mower on rough areas has proved time and time again its ability to improve grazing by allowing finer, more nutritious grasses to thrive and also reduce weed numbers. Using this



Sprayers can also be used to water all-weather riding surfaces

method can turn a previously poor area into a valuable grazing asset. The Flail Mower also comes into its own when maintaining bridle tracks through woods and across otherwise un-kempt areas, contributing to improved safety.

Paddock cleanliness, or poo-picking, is important for several reasons, not only does it prevent 'soiled' areas forming, but 'grooms' the grass by picking up other debris, thatch, moss and any topped grass, leaving a neat and more productive sward. In some areas, picking up acorns is crucial to prevent the possibility of poisoning and in general, removing horse droppings reduces the worm burden on a pasture. The use of Logic's MSP Pro-Sweep carries out this operation 10 times faster than by hand. Its remote throttle allows driving around with the engine at idle, only increasing the revs when approaching a pile of muck and once collected, it can be reduced to idle again, saving fuel. An optional tine bar is available for 'rained in' deposits which are raked out before sweeping. Both tine bar and brush operating height can be very easily adjusted and emptying the sweeper is easy due to a geared winch system which tips the generous hopper without any effort. The Pro-Sweep is also great for sweeping yards and roads, as it is highly manoeuvrable and can be towed by any suitable vehicle.



A versatile trailer is useful for many tasks around the yard

Grassland management is an art based on science and good practice and most of the practices detailed above are not complex, especially when carried out with appropriate equipment and at the right time. Every region is different and local knowledge is important, so use of local suppliers and contractors is beneficial. For

any horseowner, growing grass throughout the summer months can be very rewarding not only because it improves the look of a property, but from a feeding and health viewpoint, significant savings can be made. Conservation of surplus grass as hay or haylage is also beneficial in reducing winter feed costs and can allow a rotation of grazing or

conservation in alternate years, provided you have sufficient grassland available.

Logic has worked closely with the equestrian industry since the early 1990s to develop a range of specialist products. To find out more and view video of products in use, visit www.LogicToday.co.uk



Logic TRM120 Rotary Mower topping a grazing paddock