

Aspects Of A Horse Ranch

By Keoni Kalama



Nisqually Horses...





Feeding



- ▶ The nutritional needs of horses are extremely important. The horse has a very delicate digestive system. Each horse is individual in those needs and we have to be able to recognize what works for that individual. What is a good weight for the breed of horse and body type. Which horse has bad teeth and needs dental work. All of these are essential for the wellbeing of the horse.



Housing

- ▶ By housing I mean the paddock or area the horse is kept in. Not only is the shelter important, but the area the horse has is vital to their mental as well as their physical health. Horses have to be able to move to help digest their food; they are plains animals roaming miles in search of food. Safe fencing, water and feed are just a few of the housing needs. For the horses comfort and for our own comfort, we use fly control methods to keep the fly population down to bearable.



Handling

- ▶ Handling: Knowing how to catch a horse, knowing how to halter, lead, brush saddle, bridle, mount and dismount, and to safely release the horse. Seems funny that just to be able to catch the horse would be difficult, but it can be challenging at times. They can out run you. I have learned how to teach a horse to be easy to catch and halter.



Training



- ▶ Training: There are several methods used to train horses. Clint Anderson, John Lyons, Pat Parelli, Chris Cox, Mouny Roberts and Craig Cameron are just a few that I have researched each of their methods and have taken parts of each to develop my own. I trained with Phillis Ryan of Felicity Farms for two years learning how to train horses.



Riding



- ▶ Riding is probably the most difficult to learn. It takes years to learn the proper dressage. Horses are large frightening animals. Being on their backs is one of the most frightening, most rewarding things you can do. Problem is most people are harsh in their commands at first. I use a method I came up with while giving lessons. First, you gently ask the horse, then you tell the horse, and finally, if you do not get the results you want, you demand. As with anything else, the easier it is, the more enjoyable it is. Riding in the mountains is a lot different from riding in an arena. My wife and I have ridden out of several horse camps in the wilderness areas around the State. We are founding members of the Nisqually Chapter of the Backcountry Horsemen. I am at this time President of the chapter and have been seven other years.