

Domestic Animals and Nitrate Contamination

The nitrogen load from horse and goat waste can migrate to and impact ground water with elevated concentrations of nitrate and pathogenic bacteria. Limiting the density of animals per acre and managing wastes can prevent this. For example, the State of Montana has ordinance of one horse per acre. The risk to ground water depends on if the animal is corralled or allowed to roam, and if the area is grass covered or bare ground.

Horses have a habit of defecating and urinating in the same location in a corral which increases the risk of nitrogen contamination reaching ground water. For waste management ideas, go to the UNR Extension web site <http://www.unce.unr.edu/water> and click on “Protecting Nevada’s Water”.

It is recommended that domestic well owners get water sample from their well analyzed annually for via a domestic drinking water panel (attached).

The State Health Lab at UNR can do the domestic drinking water panel for \$100. They supply the sample bottles and sample collection instructions:

State Health Lab
UNR School of Medicine / 385
Reno, NV 89557
(775) 688-1335

For help interpreting the water analyses reports you receive from the lab, go to the UNR extension web site: <http://www.unce.unr.edu/swp/>
Click on “Interpreting Water Quality Reports”, the click “next” (you do not have to enter your name etc.)