

Winter 2010

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# The Mule Pen

The Official Newsletter of Cameron  
Mule Company  
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## KEEPING LIVESTOCK IN COLD WEATHER *by Brad Cameron*

In my travels I talk to a great many people who have no idea how to care for their mules in cold, winter weather. In the east for example, equines are usually contained, with barns and stalls. They get small amounts of turn out time but are rarely run loose on big pastures.

Out west we are much more comfortable with the idea of free ranging stock. Just the sheer numbers of livestock out west, along with the vastness of rangelands, prohibits any containment at all, a lot of times.

Also, the show world has an influence on peoples thinking, along with good marketing from feed companies. These two factors leave us thinking that blankets and grain are the answer to the equines cold weather needs.

Our mules can be very prepared for cold winter months if allowed to develop a hair coat. The hair coat is a mules natural insulation against the cold. As snow piles up on the outside of the coat, the thick hair underneath remains dry and warm. Blanketing a mule will restrict the natural hair growth and leave the mule much more vulnerable to cold weather. They are then at the mercy



**For every 10 degrees below freezing an animal needs 10% more feed to sustain its body condition.**

of the owner who must determine whether the mule is too cold or too hot. How in the heck would we know? We don't, so we blanket him up in human terms which is usually way off from what the mule would actually need!

Mules, horses, and even cattle get there body heat from the digestive action in the gut. The more feed they have to digest, the more body heat is produced. Feeding grain in cold weather does not produce body heat.

It provides protein for energy, but not enough digestive action to produce adequate body heat. Feeding plenty of good rough forage (hay) will provide more heat energy, which is what actually keeps the animal warm.

The colder it is, the more feed that is required. For every 10 degrees below freezing, an animal needs 10% more feed to sustain it's body condition.

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Winter riding can help to keep your mule going and yourself as well. Even a simple ride around the pasture can be beneficial for both of you.

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Another important thing that mules require in the winter is water. Some people are under the illusion that animals can just eat snow and get along fine. This is no more true for them than it would be for us. They need water. A stock tank, with a heater or automatic waterer with heat, is most convenient. I have however, spent many cold winter mornings chopping a hole in an ice covered stream.



Keeping the water open at 20 below zero.

A lot of times, out here, when stock is on winter range, there is no handy faucet and electrical outlet for a water tank and heater! So you do what is necessary.

The other key ingredient to keeping mules healthy and warm in winter is a wind break shelter. In open country where cold winter winds can blow, stock will use any natural barriers that are there. Trees, coulees, and draws are all places where they can get out of the wind. You can also build a wind break, if there is nothing else on your range for them to use.

So the key ingredients to having a

**A simple lean-to or board fence is an adequate windbreak.**



warm and healthy mule during the winter is a good, natural hair coat. The right amount of proper forage. Water, and a wind break if necessary.

These simple ideas can sometimes make life a lot easier for you also!



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Well another season has come and gone and a big **THANKS** to all of you that attended one of my clinics. Please keep in mind that these clinics will start again in Spring 2010. I hope to see you all again, as well as some new faces. Think of these clinics as an investment, put a little aside each month to do something

**POSITIVE** for yourself and something rewarding for your mule!

**Keep checking our website at**

***www.cameronequine.com*** for updated newsletters, clinic schedules and amazing Mules & Mountains Trips!

## EMAIL: PASS IT ON!

I am happy to have so many of you joining us on e-mail. It is our goal to reward you for joining the "**Brad Cameron Movement**" by keeping you updated with our quarterly newsletter. I will also be offering you monthly discount specials this winter on select products and DVD's! **These specials will only be available to you, our e-mail subscribers!**

**So watch for those, starting soon.**

**SEND US YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS**

***www.mulesr4us@xplornet.com***