

Gel-Filled Boots Provide Equine Comfort

Initially developed for transporting thoroughbred horses long distances about 16 years ago, these days all kinds of horses use patented Soft-Ride boots. And there are Soft-Ride Ice Spa boots for horses with hoof problems.

"Our boot is unique and made for long-term comfort," says a customer service rep for the online business. "They're ventilated properly and provide foot stimulation."

The deep gel reaches into the crevices of a horse's foot, shoes or no shoes, to push against the frog and provide deep comfort for the horse. When worn correctly, and not too loosely, the deep gel has nowhere to go but up into the foot, creating natural comfort for the horse. The volume of the gel, paired with the hard shell of the Soft-Ride Boot, creates a gel platform that enables the horse to find its most comfortable hoof angle - similar to humans shifting their feet side to side to find comfort when standing. This is ideal for hauling, standing tied and standing in stalls.

The boots are not to be used when horses are performing or being ridden. Though they can be worn continuously, the boots should be removed at least daily to remove debris.



Soft-Ride boots have a tough outer shell and a removable gel insert that cushions bottom of hoof.

Soft-Ride boots come in several sizes. The boots can be worn either on just the two front feet or on all four feet. They should not be worn on just the back feet.

Ice Spa Pro boots are taller and can be filled with water and ice for rapid cooling for recovery and rehabilitation. The boots are used to reduce inflammation and for relief after rodeo, jumping and other performance events.

Check the website for current prices.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Soft-Ride Boots (ph 855 763-8743; www.softrideboots.com).



Seed mixes are specifically designed for pasture-raised broilers and egg layers.

Pastured Poultry Seed Produces Better Birds

Pastured poultry producers can now get seed mixes designed specifically for raising both broilers and egg layers. Deer Creek Seed varies the mix of legumes, grasses and grains to match poultry needs.

"We had been custom mixing for quite a few years, but began offering branded mixes about 3 years ago," says Andy Walsh, Deer Creek Seed.

The Poultry Pasture Layer Mix is designed to supplement a conventional layer diet with protein rich greens. The largely perennial mix includes brassicas, rapeseed, turnip and clovers.

"You always have to supplement egg-layer diets with calcium for shells," he says. "If you have other feed available, just watch what they eat. Chickens are like dogs. They let you know if they need a supplement."

The 100 percent annual, Poultry Pasture Broiler Mix is 75 percent rye and barley with 20 percent pea and a small amount of turnip and rapeseed. As with the layer mix, it is suggested as a supplement to a broiler ration. However, Walsh suggests it can be reversed with the broiler feed supplementing pasture.

"The broiler mix can put weight on chickens very well," says Walsh. "Many people have produced good plump chickens on the mix alone without any corn or other feed. However, if you want faster growth, you will need to supplement with corn."

Walsh notes that a true grass-fed broiler

will be leaner, while corn-fed birds have a higher fat content. Both can affect the flavor of the meat.

The broiler mix will begin to emerge in 7 to 10 days and reach maturity within 40 days. The layer mix takes a few days more to emerge. The company recommends restricting access to the newly seeded pasture until seedlings are 2 to 3 in. tall to get thicker stands.

"If you turn the chickens in when the plants are too young, the plants will be uprooted," says Walsh. "Once they are adequately rooted, you need to use good pasture management."

Walsh encourages customers to contact him or one of the other agronomists with pasture management experience for advice. "You need to look at stocking density and practice rotational grazing for optimum productivity of the pasture and the birds," suggests Walsh. "Pasture management is an art, as you want the plants to survive to regrow."

The Poultry Pasture Broiler Mix is priced at \$12.50 for a 5-lb. bag, sufficient to plant up to 5,000 sq. ft. The Poultry Pasture Layer Mix is priced at \$21.75 for 5 lbs., enough to cover up to 4,000 sq. ft.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Deer Creek Seed Co., 6115 Pepsi Way, Windsor, Wis. 53598 (ph 877 247-3736; service@deercreekseed.com; www.deercreekseed.com).

Roving Robot Keeps Chickens Moving

French poultry farmers Laetitia and Benoit Savary were so tired of the monotonous and time-consuming job of checking poultry in their coops that they invented a robot to do the job for them. Their device is called Spoutnic, and it can work unattended 24 hrs. a day and reduce eggs laid on the ground by more than 20 percent. The inventors say this amounts to big savings as eggs laid on the ground often go to waste.

"Our thinking was that if we can launch a space probe to transport the Philae Lander 510 million kilometers from earth we should certainly be able to develop a solution to eggs laid on the ground," Benoit says. To develop their idea the Savarys teamed with Cimtech, a Mechatronics design office near Rennes, France with engineering, software, and electronics expertise. Together they formed Tibot Technologies to concept, design and build Spoutnic.

Originally intended to manage layer hens, Spoutnic has expanded its use into breeding and meat production poultry. As Spoutnic randomly moves through a poultry barn, the birds quietly move out of the way, creating exercise that fosters better health and weight



Roving robot reduces eggs laid on ground by 20 percent by keeping chickens moving.

gain. Steve Roger, a French turkey breeder, says Spoutnic moved quietly and effectively throughout his flock of broiler turkeys and handled several hours of work that was previously done by a person walking through the barn.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Tibot Technologies, 21 rue de l'Oseraie, 35510 Cesson Seveigne, France (ph 011 33 2 30 96 4800; www.tibot.fr).

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