

As Horses Move to Winter Lots, Crusaders Fence Issues Paddock Advisory

October 15, 2026

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As pasture grass across Virginia slows toward winter dormancy, the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District advises moving horses off grazing fields and into a sacrifice lot, a bare exercise area that can be as small as 14 by 24 feet for a single horse. Crusaders Fence, a licensed and insured fence company based in Culpeper, is advising Central Virginia horse owners to walk the fence and gates around that lot before the horses go in.

The reasoning is laid out in the district's winter stable management guidance. Through the cold months, pasture plants get by on dormancy while the soil stays frozen or too wet most of the time. A horse kept in what the district calls a sacrifice area still gets daily exercise, along with hay, water and salt. Before horses are confined there, the district's checklist includes making sure fences and gates "remain reliable, or repaired if necessary," and raking displaced footing, the surface material spread across the lot, back into place.

"Most owners know their pasture fence well because it's the one they see from the house," said Conall Finn, founder of Crusaders Fence. "The sacrifice lot is where the horses spend the next few months. By the time the grass comes back in spring, that small square of ground has done a lot of work."

The same seasonal advice appears outside Virginia. A University of Connecticut Extension fact sheet on pasture planning, updated in March 2025, describes the practice as setting ground aside from the grazing system to hold horses during winter months, mud season and periods of slow regrowth, and it lists less mud and ice among the benefits. Closer to home, Virginia Cooperative Extension has published a video on the benefits of keeping horses on a dry lot, presented by Albemarle County Extension agent Carrie Swanson.

Extension guidance also covers the fence itself. University of Georgia Extension's bulletin "Fences for Horses," given a full review in May 2024, treats visibility as a safety matter. It notes that painted rail fences appear to a horse as a solid barrier it is less likely to challenge or run into. The bulletin also calls mesh wire fences one of the safest fences for horses and notes that their openings are small enough to keep a hoof from catching.

Paddock work is part of the ranch fencing Crusaders Fence installs on rural properties in the region. The company builds its paddock fence with three or four wood boards and wire mesh fastened on the inside. It also installs split-rail fencing, an open style built from horizontal rails, and vinyl ranch rail, which is a board-style ranch fence made of vinyl instead of wood. The gates it installs are manual.

Finn worked in the fence trade for more than 10 years before opening Crusaders Fence in 2025 with business partner Vernon Jones. The company writes its estimates after walking a property in person, and that visit costs the owner nothing. It handles permit applications and homeowners association paperwork itself and submits the VA811 request, Virginia's call-before-you-dig notice, so underground utility lines are marked before a post hole is opened.

Photos and reviews of recent Crusaders Fence projects appear on the company's Google Business Profile, where property owners can learn more. Owners preparing a winter lot this fall can call (540) 272-0823 to schedule a free on-site estimate.

About Crusaders Fence, LLC.

Crusaders Fence, LLC is a licensed and insured fence installation company serving Fredericksburg, Stafford, Spotsylvania, Culpeper, and the surrounding Central Virginia counties. The company was founded in 2025 by Conall Finn, a licensed fence contractor with more than 10 years of trade experience, alongside business partner Vernon Jones. Crusaders Fence installs wood, vinyl, aluminum, chain link and ranch fencing, along with manual gates and fence repair services for residential, rural and light commercial properties. The company holds Virginia contractor license number 2705197740 and is accredited by the Better Business

Bureau's Richmond, VA chapter. More information is available at https://crusadersfenceva.com/.

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Crusaders Fence, LLC.

Crusaders Fence is a licensed, customer-first fence contractor serving Fredericksburg and Central Virginia since 2015. We've completed 5,000+ installations and offer same-day estimates with craftsmanship built to last.

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