

TRACK MAINTENANCE

1. HOW LONG BEFORE THE FAIR SHOULD TRACK PREPARATION BEGIN? It depends upon the weather and the track surface, but preparation should start at least one month before the fair. Even before that the track's catch basins should be checked to see that they are working. The track should be graded to move stone and dirt back toward the top of the track.

2. WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THAT SHOULD BE DONE DURING THIS PREPARATION TIME? If it is dry, start putting a lot of water on the track to get a good base.

3. WHAT TYPE OF EQUIPMENT SHOULD BE USED DURING THIS PREPARATION TIME? In addition to the water wagon, use a light screen or float to get the tire tracks out.

4. HOW MUCH WATER SHOULD BE APPLIED TO THE TRACK DURING THIS PREPARATION TIME? You can't put too much water on the track unless it is raining or rain is in the forecast. The best time of day to apply the water is in the evening, so that you get the most good out of it.

5. IF A TRACK CONDITIONER IS BEING USED, HOW DEEP SHOULD IT BE SET? Ideally, you want to get the track so you can just see the horses' shoe prints. Trotters need a little looser track than pacers, so it is a "fine line" in getting it just right. The more shallow you can set the track conditioner, the better you are. It should be set just deep enough to take the tire prints out. (Note: attending a seminar on the use of track conditioners would be very useful)

6. HOW AND WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO USE A ROLLER ON THE TRACK? If the track surface is loose, use the roller as soon as possible after watering to hold the moisture.

7. WHAT WORK SHOULD BE DONE ON THE TRACK AND WITH WHAT EQUIPMENT DURING THE TIME THAT HORSES ARE WARMING UP PRIOR TO RACE ONE? Do whatever it takes to keep the track tight. Don't cut in unless the track is too hard.

8. WHAT WORK SHOULD BE DONE ON THE TRACK AND WITH WHAT EQUIPMENT BETWEEN RACES? Do whatever it takes to take the hoof prints and tire tracks out. Keep watering as much as possible. If the track has a good base of water, it won't need as much water applied.

9. WHAT WORK SHOULD BE DONE ON THE TRACK AND WITH WHAT EQUIPMENT AFTER THE RACES ARE CONCLUDED? The track should be screened and rolled. The roller on the track conditioner could be used, and the track conditioner might have to be used to cover the hoof prints.

10. IS THERE ANY WORK THAT SHOULD BE DONE ON THE TRACK IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE FAIR OR IN THE FALL OF THE YEAR? The track needs to be re-smoothed, and that may require some more grading.

11. WHAT TYPE OF DIRT OR STONE MAKES FOR THE BEST RACING SURFACES? Clay is the best dirt. Number Nine stone is probably the best stone. If you need something to pack better, then Number Ten stone might be the best. (Remember that in stones that the higher the number, the smaller that the stone is). Don't put more than two inches of any type of stone on the track. Less than two inches would be better.

12. WHAT TYPE OF DIRT OR STONE IS THE EASIEST TO MAINTAIN? Stone is easier to maintain than dirt.

13. WHAT TYPE OF DIRT OR STONE HANDLES WET WEATHER THE BEST? A gravelly type of dirt handles rain the best. Remember to always get the track rolled well when rain is in the forecast.

Call Bill Webb at (419) 393-4119 in the spring if you would like him to examine your track to give you some advice.