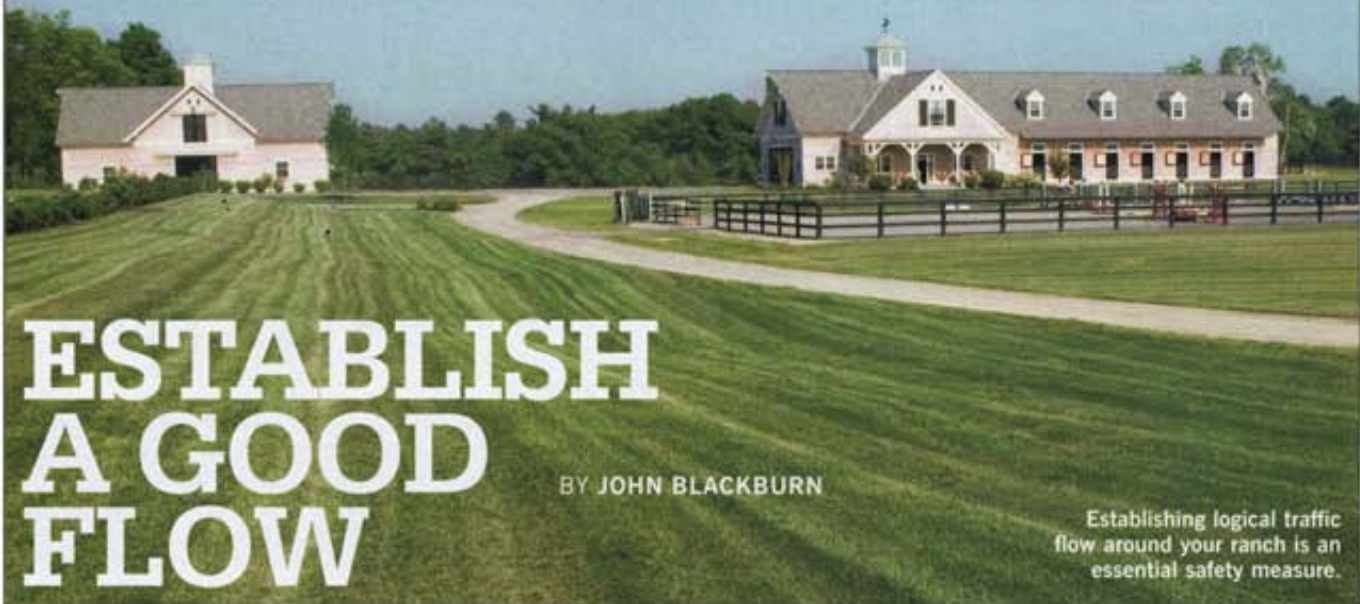


BARN PLANS



# ESTABLISH A GOOD FLOW

BY JOHN BLACKBURN

Establishing logical traffic flow around your ranch is an essential safety measure.

**T**raffic movement within your ranch is like health—you don't really notice it until something goes awry. Fortunately, careful site planning, with a focus on traffic circulation, is the ranch equivalent of taking an aspirin a day.

While the premise is simple—isolate people, horses and vehicles for maximum safety—practicing this notion requires strategy. Here are a few things to consider.

For starters, keep in mind that typical surfaces used for vehicular traffic, such as asphalt, concrete or heavy gravel, aren't horse friendly and can be injurious. This is especially evident in cold climates, where black ice or slick conditions can occur with little warning. Also, the sharp-edged gravel used in most roadway construction can be damaging to a horse's feet.

Because of this, it's helpful to create separate paths for horses and vehicles, especially vehicles piloted by drivers unfamiliar with the ranch's operation, and in areas where horses might graze or pass through. Doing so also limits the liability inherent in introducing the public—who may visit for an event, a lesson, or otherwise—to the horses.

Similarly, parking and trailer loading/unloading should be in a "horse friendly" area that's somewhat contained, in case a horse gets loose.

Because farriers and veterinarian arrive from off-site, it is safer if a barn has a location where horses can be treated or examined without crossing "routine" paths. While these

visiting professionals are usually more cautious and familiar with a ranch's operation, it's safer and more convenient if a work area is designed on the "service" side of the barn. Isolated from the public as well as the daily comings and goings of the barn, this accommodates the need for extended parking for the farrier or veterinarian.

Public access to horses needs to be limited and controlled, because visitors unfamiliar with horses might spook a horse and create danger for themselves, the horse and its handler. This applies to hay, bedding and feed deliverymen, as well as the general public.

Areas between barns, corrals, arenas and hotwalkers should be contained, if possible, and in close proximity to save leading time. All areas require "horse-friendly" materials. While some owners like to locate these areas farther from the barn to allow warm-up or cool-down time, a closer proximity might be preferable in the event of inclement weather.

A riding arena should be visible to others in case of an accident in the ring. Also, placing an outdoor arena on higher ground is not only a safety precaution, but allows for better drainage.

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*John Blackburn is an architect whose portfolio includes hundreds of equestrian projects, ranging from barns and arenas to complete training facilities. He has offices in San Francisco, California, and Washington, D.C. To learn more about Blackburn's work, visit [blackburnarch.com](http://blackburnarch.com).*