



Chrisley

Bump In The Night

I live at the center of almost a dozen small and not-so-small stables running out like spokes in every direction. My own stable is only about 40 meters from our house. There are around 30 equines within hearing distance of us.

On clear, still New Mexico evenings, with our windows open to the fresh, cool air, feeding time becomes apparent. It's not whinnying we hear; it's the monotonous percussion of feed-tub banging, feed-trough pawing, and gate rattling that fills the air.

Mornings begin early with the same chorus, and it is quite easy to discern at just what time each neighbor feeds his or her equines.

It sounds as if some wrecking crew has suddenly made itself aggressively active in barns and pastures everywhere.

When we set clocks from daylight savings to standard time, we are treated to an extra hour of increasing decibels of pounding, banging, rattling, and pawing.

It is interesting to notice a new member of a neighbor's stable yard. At first, the initiate doesn't know to add his own unique sound, but he soon learns and, for several days, seems to try it out at odd hours (especially around 3 a.m.), just in case it is the key to bringing hay and grain. Then, he seems to realize that it only works at certain times and falls into the standard routine.

The horses know that the ritual of preparation and grateful noise must be performed before the food will appear within the containers provided by their human domestics. Then, it takes a bit of effort to get the feed onto the ground where it belongs before it is eaten. ■

By Katharine Lark