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Your "BETHEL SADDLERY" or "HORSESHOE B SADDLERY" saddle has been solidly constructed and with proper and regularly care will give you long and satisfactory service.

In areas where rain is unavoidable the saddle should be given a protective coating of leather dressing as often as necessary. This also applies to extremely dry conditions.

Cleaning and applying dressing to your saddle should be done regularly, at least twice a year depending on the conditions the saddle has been exposed to. If the leather is very dry it should also be oiled. Keep in mind that while some oil is very beneficial to leather, it has little, if any value as a water-proofing agent. A quality leather dressing is best used for regular treatment, it will give the leather the suppleness that it needs as well as some waterproofing ability.

Before oiling your saddle, clean all dirt and dust off, with a soft brush and/or a damp sponge and saddle soap if necessary, being sure to give the parts which come in contact with the horse and sweat, such as rear cinch, fenders and stirrup leathers, special attention. When the saddle is dry, oil lightly, being sure that you do not miss the rigging and stirrup leathers which will have to be slid out from under the side jockey part way in order to reach all surfaces. Do not oil excessively. Saturating leather with oils opens the pores, making the leather flabby, thus causing it to collect dust which has an abrasive effect on the leather. Remember, that too much oil can be as bad as too little.

A light coat of a high quality leather dressing can be applied after oil has soaked into the leather. After dressing has dried, remove excess by polishing off with a clean cloth including the stitching if possible. If the dust is not cleaned off prior to the application of a dressing then all you are doing is causing the dust to be ingrained into the leather, which over a period, will be destructive to the saddle.

Oils and greases for leather should be pure and of either animal or vegetable origin. When using Neatsfoot, be sure it is pure, not compounded with mineral oil. These compounds are sold under misleading names such as "Prime Neatsfoot Oil". Use only "Pure Neatsfoot Oil"

Always set your saddle on a rack or a rail when not in use. If it is necessary to lay it down, lay it on it's side with all leathers straight. If the saddle gathers mildew during the rainy season clean it off regularly as it will also do the leather damage.

To keep your saddle in a safe working condition, periodically check stirrup leathers, latigos & cinches for wear and if in doubt of the safety of your saddle, have any worn parts replaced.

Try to use as clean a saddle blanket and pad as possible, as well as a clean front cinch. About 1/2" or a little more of compressed padding is the ideal to be used under our saddles. We recommend Diamond Wool Saddle Pads which are available for sale at Bethel Saddlery.

A little care will repay you well in the form of many years of good service.

*"Saddles are made for hard use, not abuse"*