

Biomechanics in Focus:

Continued Education Day at Southern Delaware Therapeutic Riding



On December 11th, the Southern Delaware Therapeutic Riding School (SDTR) hosted an enriching continued education class led by Christine Nibblett that delved deep into the biomechanics of horse and rider interaction. This event exemplified SDTR's dedication to educating volunteers in the comprehensive aspects of horsemanship, with a special focus on the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of the horses.



This clinic, tailored for our incredible team of horse leader volunteers and instructors, was not just theoretical but hands-on with the horses. The essence of the day's learning centered around the biomechanics of the horse and rider, and how they mirror each other. One of the most engaging aspects of the day was how a horse can reflect tension points in the rider. Our volunteers had the unique opportunity to directly apply these concepts with the horses, observing and learning in a tangible, practical setting.

"In a particularly insightful part of the session, we focused on the interplay between rider tension and horse response. As we guided our volunteers through techniques to release tension in the rider's body, they experienced a direct and

Continued Page 3



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President's Message

Well 2024 is going to be an exciting year for us, with lots of great activities for you to get involved with. The Scholarship Awards Dinner/Auction is coming the end of March and a new venue for the Horse Show Series at Origami Stables beginning in April, with a Judge's Perspective Clinic on April 6th. We will continue to have our Member Appreciation Ride, Drive and luncheon at Redden Headquarters in the fall. There are plenty of opportunities for you to be involved in and to volunteer at throughout the year. We look forward to seeing you throughout the year so stay tuned to our website for updates and opportunities.

Ken Horeis, DEC President

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- Mon., February 19th-Houston Firehall rear entrance**
- Mon., March 18th-**
- Mon., April 15th-**
- Mon., May 20th-**

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Biomechanics in Focus: (Continued)

palpable response in the horse. This transformation was not just felt; it was visible. Our leaders could see clear changes in the horse's body language and demeanor. It was a profound demonstration of how closely connected the emotional and physical states of horse and rider are, and how a rider's relaxation can positively influence the horse's own state of being."

The session was a dynamic platform for learning, open to questions and answers, allowing volunteers to engage directly with both the theory and practice of horsemanship. This interactive approach is a testament to SDTR's passion for equipping all volunteers with the correct skills through continued training. Our volunteers left with a deeper understanding of the subtle, yet profound communication between horse and human.

At SDTR, horses are the backbone of our program. We ensure that all aspects of proper horsemanship are applied, creating a nurturing environment for our horses to thrive alongside our volunteers and participants. This clinic was another step in ensuring the highest standards of care and understanding are maintained.

We are always looking for individuals who share our passion and dedication. Whether you're interested in horse care, becoming a side-walker, or a horse leader, we welcome you to join our amazing group of volunteers. And if you're uncertain about your fit in the program, don't worry. We hold orientations throughout the year to help you discover where you might like to contribute in this phenomenal program.

SDTR is more than just a riding school; it's a community of learning, growth, and mutual respect between humans and horses. Join us in our journey to create a world where both horses and people can achieve their full potential. Your involvement could make a significant difference in both your life and the lives of our equine companions.

Interested? Contact us to find out more about how you can become a part of this enriching experience.

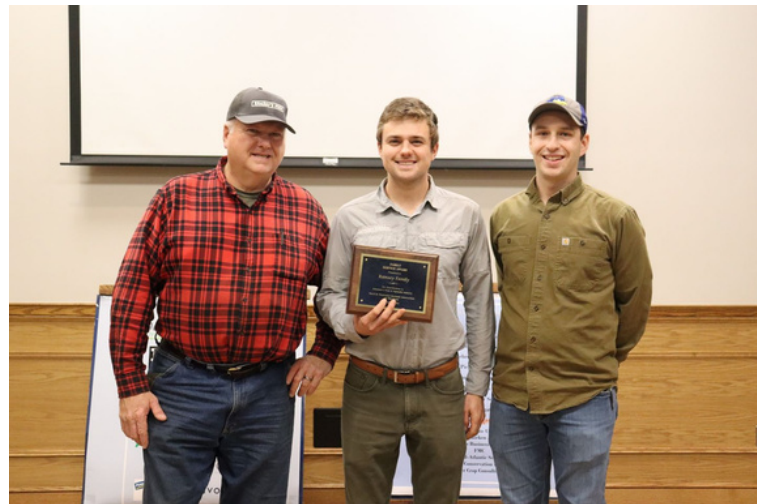


 A photograph of a rider on a dark horse jumping a fence. The rider is wearing a green jacket and white pants. The horse is in mid-air, clearing the fence. In the background, there is a large brick building and a grassy area.

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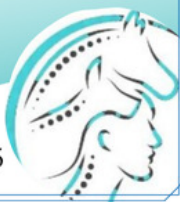
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Article Submission

Do you have something interesting happening in the equine world?

Send articles and information for the Delaware Equine News to warrington_girls@yahoo.com

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Preventing Gastric Ulcers in Performance Horses

November 6, 2023 Posted by Janice L. Holland, PhD

Performance horses' lifestyles put them at a greater risk of developing gastric ulcers. An equine nutritionist explains how to combat this.

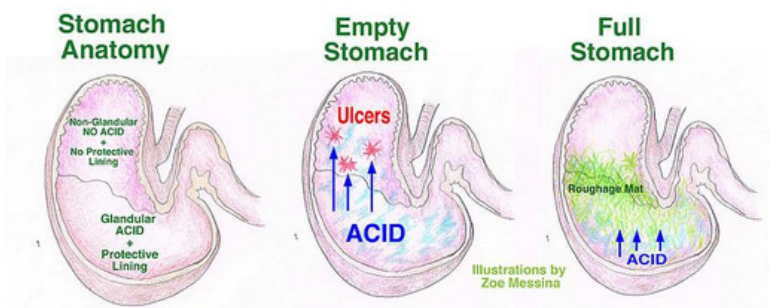


Feeding a small amount of forage before competition can help reduce your horse's risk of developing gastric ulcers. | Erica Larson

Q. I compete with my horse in the jumpers year-round. I know that it is advisable to feed a small meal before riding to prevent ulcers, but what is the best practice for showing? Should I feed my horse a small meal before he shows? If so, how far in advance and what would be best to feed him (forage vs. concentrate, etc.)?

A. It is great that you are thinking about preventing ulcers, or at least decreasing their severity, before they start. Studies have shown that 60 to 90 percent of performance horses have ulcers. Unfortunately, typical show horse management practices, including stall confinement, higher-concentrate (grain) diets, travel to new venues, and stress level, can contribute to ulcer development. Horses that develop ulcers often exhibit nervous or aggressive behaviors, sensitivity in the back or girth area, teeth grinding, decreased appetite and poor performance. They might also lie on their backs in their stall, which seems to alleviate some of the pain associated with gastric ulcers.

Gastric ulcers occur when acids produced in the stomach, such as hydrochloric acid, come in contact with the wall of the upper stomach (called the squamous region). This region does not have a protective mucus layer, like what is found in the lower, glandular region, which is where acids are secreted. In performance horses this often happens during exercise.



Feeding practices, such as infrequent meals, can leave the stomach empty; however, horses are designed to eat small, frequent meals and secrete acid constantly. An "empty" stomach, which occurs when meals are quickly digested and separated by several hours, is more susceptible to developing ulcers.

There are several things you can do, from a dietary standpoint, to help lessen the incidence of ulcers at shows and at home. If you are feeding a concentrate, divide it into multiple small meals throughout the day to decrease stomach acidity (more on why this helps in a moment). You could also switch to a feed higher in fat, which can help to decrease stomach acidity.

Your horse should have access to high-quality forage throughout the day, and hay containing a legume, such as alfalfa, will be higher in calcium, which is a natural buffer for stomach acid. From a management standpoint you should hand-walk and hand-graze your horse—or even give your horse some turnout in a paddock, if available—to help decrease your horse's stress levels, and provide him with more forage.



You are correct that feeding a small meal prior to competing can help prevent ulcers. However, you need to be careful regarding what you feed. A grain meal is not advisable, but owners should avoid filling the stomach with a large hay meal. A good alternative is to feed about a pound of chopped forage 30 minutes prior to competing. This will provide a few advantages: it will fill the stomach so it is not completely empty, and the forage will also essentially form a cover which will float on top of the acidic fluids and can keep the acid from splashing on the squamous region.

If you have any concerns that your horse has ulcers developing, consult your veterinarian. There are medications containing omeprazole and some natural supplements that can help heal the ulcers, and most horses respond positively with improved attitude and better performance. You should also speak with a nutritionist to make sure you are meeting your horse's dietary needs and minimizing the potential for ulcer development.

How Weather Affects Equine Disease

January 2, 2024 Posted by SallyAnne L. DeNotta, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACVIM

News about climate change is everywhere these days, but did you know natural disasters and changing weather patterns can also increase your horse's risk for contracting some of the most serious infectious diseases?

The American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) recommends all adult horses be vaccinated at least annually against five diseases, regardless of the animals' age, intended use, or travel frequency. These "core" vaccinations protect against West Nile virus (WNV), Eastern and Western equine encephalomyelitis (EEE/WEE), rabies, and tetanus. All these diseases are transmitted naturally through mosquitoes (the primary vector for WNV and EEE/WEE), wildlife (rabies), or contaminated wounds (tetanus). Natural disasters and severe weather patterns often bring excessive rainfall, flooding, and displacement of both wildlife and resident animal populations, making each of these modes of disease transmission much more likely.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports that rising global average temperature is associated with widespread changes in weather patterns and that extreme weather events such as heat waves and large storms are likely to become more frequent and intense with climate change. The EPA also reports that average temperatures have increased across the contiguous 48 states since 1901, with an increased rate of warming over the past 30 years. The prevalence of extreme single-day precipitation events has risen substantially since 1980. The occurrence of abnormally high annual precipitation totals has also increased in recent decades.



So how does this affect your horse? Flooding creates large areas of standing water, which are the perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes. This is further exacerbated by the warm, humid weather that typically follows hurricanes and monsoons, creating massive blooms in mosquito populations and substantially increasing your horse's risk of mosquito-borne virus exposure. Flooding also forces native wildlife populations to relocate to higher ground. Crowding of wildlife and domestic animal populations on limited dry ground increases horses' risk of contact with animals such as raccoons, foxes, and skunks—species known to carry the rabies virus.

High winds can damage structures and property and leave dangerous debris in your horse's environment. Broken fences, downed wires, and sharp objects such as nails and metal roofing can cause lacerations or puncture wounds and increase your horse's risk of contracting tetanus, which is caused by the bacterium *Clostridium tetani*.

As if all that wasn't enough, if a natural disaster forces you to evacuate your horse to a shelter location, he'll be at risk of contracting infectious diseases that tend to spread when horses commingle in close quarters. These diseases include the respiratory viruses equine influenza and equine herpesvirus as well as the bacterium *Streptococcus equi*, which causes strangles. All are highly contagious pathogens (disease-causing organisms) known to cause outbreaks of illness during times of stress, travel, and crowding ... all of which could be unavoidable realities in a natural disaster evacuation scenario.

Thankfully, most if not all the aforementioned diseases are highly preventable through vaccination. In warm, wet climates, like those of the southeastern United States, where mosquitoes can be active year-round, horses might need more frequent vaccine boosters for mosquito-borne viruses. This might also apply to regions of the country experiencing unusually warm weather in the winter and early spring. Remember, the eve of a natural disaster is not the time to be scheduling a vaccine appointment, so work with your veterinarian to create a comprehensive preventive health care program that keeps your horses protected year-round—on sunny and rainy days alike.

You can find further information about equine infectious diseases and how to prevent them at AAEP.org, equinediseasecc.org, and TheHorse.com/infectious-diseases.



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No shadow on Groundhog Day in Pennsylvania, on Friday. Punxsutawney Phil is predicting that an early spring season is on its way.

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Strangles (Streptococcus equi)

DE Dept. of Ag website

Strangles is a bacterial infection caused by *Streptococcus equi*. While the disease is common, with most horses exposed and/or infected at a young age, it is considered to be highly contagious. The incubation period is from 3 to 14 days.

What are the signs and symptoms of Strangles in horses?

- Fever >101.5°F, usually preceding other clinical signs by 24 – 28 hours
- Abscesses in the mandibular lymph nodes (in the throatlatch and below the jaw)
- Nasal discharge, often thick white and yellow mucus
Inflammation of the throat
- Difficulty swallowing
- Wheezing
- Cough

How is Strangles spread?

Strangles is spread from horse to horse through direct contact or from contact with a contaminated surface, including contaminated clothing of caretakers, shared water and feed buckets, and equipment. *S. equi* is present during the incubation period and the horse can be a carrier without any clinical signs. Horses who have been infected but are clinically healthy can continue to incubate and shed *S. equi*. A recovered horse may be a potential source of infection for at least six weeks after the clinical signs have disappeared. After recovery, it is possible that some horses will become long-term, periodic shedders of the bacteria that can cause new outbreaks.

Biosecurity

Horse owners, trainers, and staff should practice good biosecurity to help prevent the spread of this infectious disease. These measures include:

Any horses displaying clinical signs compatible with strangles including, but not limited to, fever > 101.5 ° F, nasal discharge, cough, submandibular swelling, lethargy, and inappetence, should contact their veterinarian and isolate suspect horses at least 50 yards away from other horses.

Do not share water, feed, or equipment with other horses.

Wash hands in between handling horses with soap and water to prevent spreading infectious agents.

Sanitize equipment using a 10 percent bleach in water (or other effective disinfectant) to kill bacteria and viruses.

Shower prior to and wear freshly laundered clothes and clean shoes (not worn at a farm), when presenting to any other equine premises for work.

What to do if you suspect Strangles on your farm?

Immediately contact your veterinarian. Your veterinarian will need to make a diagnosis through culture or PCR testing to confirm the disease. You should isolate the suspected horse(s) at least 50 yards away from other horses to prevent contact. Continue to practice the biosecurity measures listed above.

Emergency Equine Assistance Program

DEC Emergency Equine Assistance Program is a payment program designed to assist horse/equine owners who demonstrate financial need with the cost of hay, feed, or veterinary services for their equines. Payments will be to the feed/hay suppliers or veterinarians to cover actual, documented out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the horse/equine owner. **Visit https://delawareequinecouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/eeap_all_docs.pdf** Our online application forms are the fastest way to get help. Please use the link to access the forms. Fill them out completely and accurately. When complete, they will be e-mailed directly to the committee.

Hoof Abscesses

By Brian W. Fitzgerald, DVM via aaep.org



The scenario is all too familiar for many horse owners... yesterday your horse was sound, but today you find him crippled, with no apparent injury! What could have happened? Odds are this horse has a hoof abscess. Sooner or later, nearly all horse owners will encounter this problem. Fortunately, most horses make a full recovery with prompt treatment.

Hoof Abscesses Explained

Hoof abscesses occur when bacteria get trapped between the sensitive laminae (the tissue layer that bonds the hoof capsule to the coffin bone) and the hoof wall or sole. The bacteria create exudate (pus), which builds up and creates pressure behind the hoof wall or sole. This pressure can become extremely painful.

Although most commonly seen during the wet winter and spring months, hoof abscesses can plague horses year-round. Moisture in the environment can soften regions of the foot and make it easier for bacteria to get trapped inside. Extremely dry conditions can cause brittle, cracked feet. The abscess-causing bacteria enter the foot through hoof cracks, by traveling up the white line, through penetrating wounds to the foot, and even by "close" horseshoeing nails. Deep bruising might also trigger abscesses.

Diagnosing a Hoof Abscess

While a hoof abscess generally takes several days to develop, most horses don't show any clinical signs until the pressure becomes so great that severe lameness is evident. Often this lameness develops overnight. Changes in blood flow to the hoof cause it to throb, and this can be detected as a more evident pulse in the affected lower limb. Palpation of the coronary band (hairline) or heel bulbs often elicits pain. Some hoof abscesses can cause varying degrees of swelling in the lower limbs, but the majority will not. It is important to involve your veterinarian early on in the diagnosis and treatment of this condition because hoof abscesses can mimic other more serious diseases or injuries.

Vets usually diagnose a hoof abscess based on history and a physical examination. Whenever possible your vet will use hoof testers to localize the abscess to a region of the foot. Sometimes he or she might use diagnostic nerve blocks or even radiographs to confirm the diagnosis or to pinpoint the exact location of the abscess.

Treatment

The quickest way to relieve hoof abscess pain is to drain the exudates buildup, which is like popping a large pimple. The growing exudates and pressure of the abscess will try to take the path of least resistance. For some abscesses, this means they will rupture on their own and drain at the coronary band (commonly referred to as a "gravel") or heel bulbs. Other abscesses will need to be surgically drained by your veterinarian. For a small percentage of abscesses, they will spread deeper into surrounding structures, such as the coffin bone, the navicular bursa, or deep digital flexor tendon sheath. This is particularly true with chronic abscesses in which treatment is delayed. If any of these other structures become affected, the treatment can be prolonged, costly, and could result in unsoundness.

In most cases, your veterinarian will create a small hole through the white line, sole, or hoof wall in order to provide a pathway for the exudate to leave the foot. Once drainage is established, your veterinarian will probably apply some type of poultice or bandage to help pull the remaining exudates from the hoof. Depending on where the abscess drains, your vet might recommend keeping the drainage site clean until it has had a chance to dry and harden.

Prevention

Regular hoof care and farriery is an important step in preventing hoof abscesses, but there is no guarantee that your horse will be immune to this problem. While difficult to control, avoiding extremely wet or dry conditions, as well as sudden changes in moisture, can help prevent formation of hoof abscesses. Routine mucking of stalls, pens, or other confined areas can also help prevent them.



Upcoming Events:

Mar. 30-DECF Scholarship Awards Dinner & Auction, Harrington Moose Lodge

Apr. 6-DEC "Judge's Point of View" Clinic, Origami Stables, contact Joan

Greenberg 631-905-5800

Apr. 28-DEC Show Series, Origami Stables, Contact Joan Greenberg 631-905-5800

May 12-DEC Show Series, Origami Stables, Contact Joan Greenberg 631-905-5800

Sept. 8-DEC Show Series, Origami Stables, Contact Joan Greenberg 631-905-5800-

Dbl pts.

Sept. 21 & 22 DAHA Fall Spotacular, Contact Tammy Shorts 302-526-6944

Sept. 29-DEC's Member Appreciation Day Ride/Drive/Lunch, rsvp to Stan

Vonasek 302-249-5158

Oct. 6-DEC Show Series, Origami Stables, Contact Joan Greenberg 631-905-5800

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