



U of M Horse Newsletter

Providing research-based information to Minnesota Horse Owners

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Vet School Success Story By: Krista Steffenhagen, DVM Student

It all started when Rooster Rascal's owners noticed that he suddenly was barely putting any weight on his right front leg. When no improvement was seen it was time to take him to the specialists at the University of Minnesota. On arrival, Dr. Mauro Verna performed a lameness exam and found the right hoof was warm with pounding digital pulses. The sole was pared out but there was no evidence of a puncture wound. Nerve blocks localized the pain to the inner part of the hoof and X-rays of the hoof showed that somehow a 2" nail had become so deeply embedded in Rooster Rascal frog that it could not be seen with the naked eye. By injecting sterile dye into the navicular bursa and taking more X-rays, Dr. Verna

determined that the nail had traveled through the frog, the digital cushion, the deep flexor tendon and through the navicular bursa. The situation was serious but fortunately for Rooster Rascal, the nail had not punctured into the coffin joint. Arthroscopic surgery of the navicular bursa was performed and the surgeons found a tear in the deep flexor tendon as well as damage to the cartilage covering the navicular bone. The surface of the cartilage was smoothed and all damaged tissues were removed. Antibiotics were injected directly into the bursa and a drainage hole was created in the frog that was packed with gauze. When he awoke from the anesthetic Rooster Rascal was much more comfortable. Intravenous

antibiotics were given to control infection and a special shoe with a removable plate over the sole was placed on Rooster Rascal's foot that allowed bandages to be changed every other day. Rooster Rascal returned home 5 days after his surgery with only a slight limp. After continued antibiotics and bandage changes, the hole in the frog began to fill with healthy tissue. Rooster Rascal could resume his usual exercise two months after the surgery. Today Rooster Rascal is feeling no pain and happy to have received care at the U-M-VMC.



Ask The Expert

By: Julie Wilson, DVM

Q: With limited hay supply in my area, is it safe to feed baleage to my horses?

A: You can feed baleage to horses, however, there are some precautions you need to take. Horses are very susceptible to botulism, which is linked to baleage and is often fatal. Horse owners who are feeding baleage should consider vaccinating their horses with at least two initial immunizations against this disease and then continue with yearly boosters. However, the vaccine is rather crude and causes considerable vaccination reactions in some horses so it is not a decision to make lightly. As baleage feeding is uncommon, most veterinarians are unlikely to have the vaccine in stock so they will most likely need time to order it.

If hay is short, consider feeding alfalfa cubes, beet pulp or increasing the horses grain. However, remember that horses need their diet to consist of at least 2/3 forages in some form or another.

Inside This Issue

U of M Vet School Success Story	1
Ask the Expert	1
Pasture Management Calendar	2
Vaccinations	2
Fly and Pest Control	2

Up Coming Events

Pasture Plant and Weed ID Classes. May 5 in Farmington, May 17 in Buffalo and May 26 in Andover. For more information, please contact Kristi at 763-767-3837.

Volunteer Opportunity

A new program has been launched partnering horse enthusiasts with the U of M's neonatal intensive care program for large animals. The cases are predominately foals, but at times include calves and crias. Please contact Vivian Neige at neige001@umn.edu or 612-624-3928 for more information.

MN Horse Expo

April 22-24



Most horse owners are aware that pastures need some level of management to produce large amounts of high quality forage through out the growing season. However, horse owners may not realize there are proper times to conduct these activities. In this article, you will find a table of pasture activities and the approximate dates these activities should be carried out. Please be advised that the dates in the table are only meant as suggestions and should

Pasture Management Calendar By: Krishona Martinson

Suggestions and should not be taken as absolute. The weather in your area will be the biggest determination of exact dates, but generally speaking, pastures can provide feed for horses from May through September. When rotating; mow, drag and fertilize (if needed) the paddock your horses were just moved from.

April	Soil Test
Mid-April	Apply fertilizer if needed
May 1 to 15	Begin Grazing
Mid June	Rotate your horses into new paddock
Mid July	Rotate your horses into new paddock
Mid August	Rotate your horses into new paddock
Mid September	Rotate your horses into new paddock
Late September	Remove horses from pasture.

An equine veterinarian should be a key partner in planning a vaccination program for your horse, even if you plan to administer the vaccines yourself. Things to keep in mind include; breeding status, age, use, travel, and location. The following is a guideline for planning your vaccination strategies. A note of caution, there is little published data on the true efficacy of many of the vaccines, so other veterinarians may have different opinions. All

Vaccinations

horses in MN should receive tetanus, rabies and Eastern (EEE) and Western (WEE) encephalomyelitis and West Nile virus vaccines. A tetanus booster may be recommended if more than 6 months have passed and the horse sustains a wound. It is controversial if all horses should get a rabies vaccination. West Nile, EEE & WEE may require a fall booster, 4

By: Julie Wilson, DVM

months later, if mosquito season is extended. In 2002, there were 992 confirmed cases of West Nile, hundreds of which died. Horses going to shows or group activities should receive; strangles, influenza and rhinopneumonitis. The killed vaccine against rhinopneumonitis (Pneumabort K) is often used in broodmares to prevent abortion at 5, 7 and 9 months of pregnancy.

Non-routine horse vaccines that are available include; Potomac horse fever (diarrheal disease), equine protozoal myelitis (neurological disease spread by opossums), rotavirus (diarrheal disease of foals), equine viral arteritis (cause of abortion and respiratory disease), botulism (only if botulism has been a farm problem or feeding baleage), and anthrax (only recommended for farms where the disease has been a problem).

Horses can be pestered by several different kinds of flies. Aquatic biting flies develop as larvae in aquatic sources. The best way to protect horses from aquatic biting flies is to house them indoors during bad times of the day. A variety of repellents are also available, but research has shown they only last a few hours. Filth flies (stable and

Fly and Pest Control

house flies) develop in wet organic debris. A key element of filth fly control is to prevent fly breeding. Soiled sawdust and sand naturally produces far fewer flies than straw and corn stalk bedding. A variety of non-toxic traps may provide some relief in confined spaces, but not

outdoors. Residual sprays, lasting up to 3 weeks, can be applied to fencing, walls and other structures to kill adult flies, but make sure to follow labeled instructions to ensure safety to you and your horse. Mosquitoes and West Nile virus should be a concern for all

By: Roger Moon, PhD

horse owners. Horse owner should consult with their vet to begin an appropriate vaccination program several months before the onset of mosquito season. In MN, mosquito activity can begin as early as the middle of April in some years.