



U of M Horse Newsletter

Providing research-based information to Minnesota Horse Owners

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Volume 5, Issue 2

February 2009



Companion Animal Welfare Act

The Animal Humane Society has seen a significant increase in equine related cases (both complaints and seizures) over the past two years. It is important to draw people's attention to the legal **minimum requirements** for horse ownership. According to Chapter 346 in the Minnesota Pet and Companion Animal Welfare Act, equines are defined as horses, ponies, mules, and burros. The Act outlines several requirements, including:

1. **Food.** Equines must be provided with food of sufficient quantity and quality to allow for normal growth or the maintenance of body weight. Feed standards shall be those recommended by the National Research Council.

2. **Water.** Equines must be provided with clean, potable water in sufficient quantity to satisfy the animal's needs or supplied by free choice. Snow or ice is not an adequate water source.

3. **Shelter.** Equines must be provided a minimum of free choice protection or constructed shelter from adverse weather conditions, including direct sun, extreme heat or cold, wind, or precipitation. Natural or constructed shelters must be of sufficient size to provide the necessary protection. Constructed shelters must be structurally sound, free of injurious matter, maintained in good repair, and ventilated. Outside exercise paddocks do not require separate constructed shelters, as long as equines are not kept in outdoor exercise paddocks during adverse weather conditions.

4. **Space and cleanliness requirements.** Constructed shelters except for tie stalls must provide space for the animal to: (1) roll with a minimum danger of being cast; or (2) easily stand, lie down, and turn around. Stalls must be cleaned and kept dry to the extent the animal is not required to lie or stand in fluids. Bedding must be provided in all stalls, kept reasonably clean, and periodically changed. The nature of the bedding must not pose a health hazard to the animal.

5. **Exercise.** Equines must be provided

opportunity for periodic exercise, either through free choice or through a forced work program, unless exercise is restricted by a licensed veterinarian.

6. **Hoof care.** All equines must have their hooves properly trimmed periodically to prevent lameness.

7. **Transportation.** A vehicle used to transport an equine must have a floor capable of supporting the animal's weight safely. Floors must be of nonskid construction or of nonskid material sufficient to provide the animal with traction while in transport. A minimum of 12 inches must be allowed between the withers of the largest equine and the structure above the animal while it is in a natural standing position. Sturdy partitions must be provided at a minimum of approximately every ten feet inside the vehicle. Interior compartments of transporting vehicles must be of smooth construction with no protruding or sharp objects and must provide ventilation. Food and water must be provided in sufficient quantities to minimize stress and maintain hydration.

A veterinarian must report known or suspected cases of abuse, cruelty, or neglect to peace officers and humane agents. If you know of or suspect an animal neglect or cruelty case, please contact Animal Humane Society (AHS) (763-489-2235), AHS Agents Keith Streff (763-489-2236) or Wade Hanson (763-489-1570), your local law enforcement agency, or an animal control facility. Your call will be kept confidential, but you may be asked to testify if charges are filed, or submit an eyewitness statement (follow up with AHS for more information). You will need to leave your name and a phone number in case more information is needed. The correct address of where the violation is occurring is very important and needed to open an investigation. For your safety, never approach someone you suspect of animal cruelty or neglect. Contacting the correct agency(ies) will result in the best resolution of the problem.

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Upcoming Events

2009 WINTER HORSE OWNER PROGRAMS

Saturday, February 21st

UW-River Falls
Agricultural Science Building
River Falls, WI

Registration deadline:
Wednesday, Feb. 18th

Saturday, March 14th

Thumper Pond Resort
Ottertail, MN

Registration deadline:
Wednesday, March 11th

Register online at

www.extension.umn.edu/horse

U of M Horse Team Quarterly "Lunch and Learn Webinar"

Wednesday April 15th
Noon

"Equine Genetics"

By Molly McCue, DVM

Next webinar on July 15th

Topic: Manure Management

By Betsy Wieland

Checkout the New Factsheets (on website)

- Equine Law
- Manure Management and Composting
- Humane Options for Unwanted Horses



Equine Dentistry

By: Holly Bedford, DVM, U of M

The practice of floating teeth should be considered a fundamental part of every horse's routine veterinary care (Figure 1). Floating of horses' teeth involves filing down the sharp enamel points that have developed naturally over time on the "buccal" or cheek surface of the upper teeth and along the "lingual" or tongue surface of the lower teeth.

There are several reasons why horses develop sharp enamel points. Horses' teeth continue to grow throughout life and the teeth are worn down by contact with other teeth. Because horses' upper jaws are wider than their lower jaws, the outer aspect of the upper teeth do not directly contact the lower teeth and the inside surface of the lower teeth do not directly contact the upper teeth resulting in development of sharp points.

Sharp enamel points can cause

ulceration of the tongue and cheek lining. These sores can cause pain during eating or biting problems when ridden. Frequently, horses with dental discomfort will tilt their head to one side when eating or drop an excessive amount of grain out of their mouth when chewing. Some horses may have difficulty maintaining body condition due to dropping of feed and reduced feed utilization. Feed utilization is decreased due to inability to mechanically break down feed material into the smaller sizes required for optimal digestion. Poorly chewed feed can also lead to intestinal impactions and colic or chronic esophageal choke. Horse's teeth should be checked at least once yearly, even if you do not notice any problems.

Some horses may require annual dental floating, especially if bite

abnormalities are noted, such as an overbite (parrot mouth) or underbite (monkey mouth). Geriatric horses should be evaluated for loose teeth that may require pulling. Young horses should be evaluated for loose caps (baby teeth) that can be removed and for the presence of wolf teeth that are frequently removed to prevent interference with the bit.

Today, with the invention of motorized dental floats, full mouth speculums, and more specialized dentistry equipment, dental floating has become an integral part of equine care. In Minnesota, licensed veterinarians and Jim Johnson are allowed to float teeth. Non-veterinarians may float teeth under the direct supervision of a veterinarian.



Figure 1. Floating a horse's teeth

Need Help Finding Hay?

By: Krishona Martinson, PhD, U of M

The University of Minnesota has compiled a list of hay auctions in Minnesota. The below table is not an endorsement by the University, but is meant to provide a resource for horse owners looking for hay.

When buying hay (either from a private party or from a hay auction), consider the following:

1. Buy good quality hay. Inspect several bales and evaluate them for content (grass or alfalfa) maturity (presence or absence of
2. If possible, have the hay tested for quality (see the October 2008 newsletter for more information) before purchase. Three of the hay auctions are "quality tested" auctions.
3. Try to keep your hay type (grass and/or alfalfa) consistent. Constantly changing hay types can lead to horse health problems,

especially colic.

The University of Minnesota has also compiled a list of private hay suppliers that is available on the website. The list is a resource for horse owners seeking hay, and is not an endorsement from the University, nor a complete list.

Additional information can be found in the September and June 2008 newsletters, and on the horse team website (www.extension.umn.edu/horse).

Belle Plaine Commission Hay Sale Belle Plaine, MN 56011 Every Thursday Except Holidays Start Time: Noon Phone: 952-873-2292	Cannonball Hay Company Randolph, MN 55065 2 nd and 4 th Saturday (October - April) Start Time: 1:00 pm Phone: 507-263-3396	Farm Country Coop Hay Auction Pine Island, MN 55963 2 nd and 4 th Saturday (October - April) Start Time: 10:00 am Phone: 800-356-8313	Lake Region Coop Hay Sale Maple Lake, MN 55358 1 st Saturday (October - May) Start Time: 11:00 am Phone: 320-963-6804	Quality Tested Hay Auction Litchfield, MN 55355 2 nd and 4 th Tuesday (November - May) Start Time: Noon Phone: 320-693-9371
Bostrom's Hay Auction Isanti, MN 55040 2 nd and 4 th Saturday (November - April) Start Time: 10:00 am Phone: 763-444-9256	East Central Livestock Hay Sale Mora, MN 55051 Every Wednesday (throughout entire year) Start Time: Noon Phone: 320-679-4333	Hotovec Auction Center Hay Sale Hutchinson, MN Every Wednesday (throughout entire year) Start Time: Noon Phone: 320-587-3347	Quality Tested Hay Auction Sauk Center, MN 56378 1 st and 3 rd Thursday (September - May) Start Time: 12:30 pm Phone: 320-760-2979	Quality Tested Hay Sale Caledonia, MN 55921 2 nd Friday (December - March) Start Time: 1:00 pm Phone: 507-725-5807