



# U of M Horse Newsletter

*Providing research-based information to Minnesota Horse Owners*

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Volume 2, Issue 1

January 2006



## Creating a 1<sup>st</sup> Aid Kit

By: Jennifer Johnson, DVM, U of M

It is always a good idea to have first aid supplies on hand when traveling with your horse. A small kit stored in your truck or trailer can be priceless in the face of an emergency. First, pick a container for your first aid kit. Large tool or tackle boxes work well, as do tote-style bags with multiple pockets. The key is to have everything organized so it is easy to locate in an emergency. Next, stock your first aid kit. You may need to consult with your

veterinarian to obtain some supplies. Useful items to include are:

- Digital thermometer
- Stethoscope
- Watch with second hand
- Non-stick telfa pads
- Clean/Sterile roll cotton
- Vet wrap/Ace bandage
- Triple antibiotic ointment
- Sterile saline eye flush
- Eye lube/antibiotic ointment (without steroids)

- Bandage scissors
- Epsom salts
- Cold packs
- Poultice wraps
- Needles and syringes\*
- Banamine or Bute\*
- Sedation\*

\*These items should be obtained from your veterinarian. Please follow your veterinarians instructions for their use. It can be dangerous for your horse to receive medication without proper instruction.

## Ask the Expert

By: Julie Wilson, DVM, U of M

**Q:** I've recently heard that a Coggins test is not necessary. I'd also like some current facts on Equine Infection Anemia (EIA) and its risk to my horses.

**A:** First of all, a Coggins test, named after the virologist who developed the test, Leroy Coggins, tests for EIA. Many labs are now using a simpler ELISA test for EIA. EIA, also known as Swamp Fever, must be federally reported. There is no treatment, or vaccine. That is why there are laws requiring testing for public exhibition or interstate transportation. The virus is like HIV in humans, but is primarily transmitted by biting flies. The best way to limit the spread of EIA is through annual testing of all horses, and immediate testing of any horse that shows signs compatible with the disease (fever, blood spots on mucous membranes, swelling of limbs, anemia). Horses with acute EIA have very high levels of virus in its blood, enough that one teaspoon has enough virus to infect thousands of horses. The asymptomatic (showing no signs) horse has much lower levels of virus in their blood, but still poses a risk to nearby horses. The number of positive horses in Minnesota, by county, is readily available at the website: [http://www.bah.state.mn.us/diseases/eia/eia\\_map.pdf](http://www.bah.state.mn.us/diseases/eia/eia_map.pdf) The majority of these cases were identified by routine testing. Nationally, the distribution of the disease can be readily viewed at this website: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/naahps/equine/eia/>. The national website also shows the trends in data per year. In Minnesota in 2005, 5 horses tested positive out of 47,118 samples. Minnesota has had several years in the last ten where the positive cases were in the double digits. Several states, such as Arkansas and Texas, have had very active campaigns to reduce EIA cases. These testing programs have been successful in reducing the numbers of EIA cases and need to be continued. Testing for EIA **IS NECESSARY** (via a Coggins test) to track and help contain the disease. It is recommended that all horses be tested annually for EIA. Testing is mandatory for horses being transported across state lines and attending certain shows or group events.

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### Up Coming Events Visit the website for additional information

February 18th, 2006  
Horse Owner Education Day  
Winona, MN  
9:30 am -3:00 pm  
Contact Kristi at  
763-767-3837

February 25th, 2006  
Horse Owner Education Day  
Cambridge, MN  
9:30 am -3:00 pm  
Contact Kristi at  
763-767-3837

March 4, 2006  
Hands-on Horse Day at the  
U of M in St. Paul.  
Online registration available at  
[www.cvm.umn.edu/outreach](http://www.cvm.umn.edu/outreach)

March 11th, 2006  
Horse Owner Education Day  
Norwood, MN  
9:30 am - 3:00 pm  
Contact Laura at  
952-466-5300

March 18th, 2006  
Horse Owner Education Day  
Fergus Falls, MN  
9:30 am - 3:00 pm  
Contact Kristi at  
763-767-3837



The goal of National Animal ID System (NAIS) is to identify all animals and premises that have had direct contact with a foreign animal disease or a domestic disease of concern within 48 hours after discovery. NAIS would allow for rapid tracing of animals during an outbreak situation, helping to limit the scope and expense of the outbreak and minimize the impact on domestic and foreign livestock markets. Animal identification is not a new concept in the United States. It is common for horses to be branded, tattooed, registered with different breed organizations, and/or have a DNA record on file. However, there is no uniform, nationwide animal

A horse's nutritional requirements change when the temperature dips low during the winter. The ideal situation is to have a horse entering the winter acclimated to the cold with a thick hair coat and fat cover. It has been estimated that a horse with a healthy winter coat and can keep dry, will be comfortable at temperatures down to 18° F; but if the horse has access to a shelter it can tolerate temperatures as low as -40° F. As the temperature decreases with the onset of winter, the horse requires additional dietary energy in order to maintain its body temperature and condition. For every degree below

## National Animal ID

By: Krishona Martinson, U of M

identification system in place for all livestock, including horses. Premise registration is the first priority and the backbone of the NAIS program and is important to ensure animal health authorities have immediate premise location information during a disease emergence to ensure investigation progresses rapidly and efficiently. Any premise involved with housing or commingling of horses (or any livestock) or horse commerce and movement should register for premise id number. These include, but are not limited to: farms and ranches; hobby farms and residential properties with small horse herds; sale barns; indoor and outdoor show arenas; breeding and training

facilities; vet clinics; State, County and Local Trails; and Fair Grounds. Registering your premise id number is free and easy. You can register for your premise id number (MN residents only) online at [www.bah.state.mn.us/index/nais/registration.htm](http://www.bah.state.mn.us/index/nais/registration.htm). The premise information obtained (only basic information that is needed for effective disease detection and control) will be kept confidential and will only be used by federal and state animal health official to administer animal health programs at the state and national level and during emergency situations. There are additional, potential benefits, other than reducing potential effects and

enhanced control of equine disease outbreaks, they include: 1. maintain equine commerce and movement of horses in the case of a disease outbreak; 2. assist equestrian events in ensuring a healthy environment for participating horses; 3. expedite recovery and identification of horses in case of loss due to natural disaster, theft or accident; 4. facilitate import and export of equine; and 5. uphold the horse industry as a responsible member of the livestock community. To learn more about NAIS, please visit [www.extension.umn.edu/horse](http://www.extension.umn.edu/horse). NAIS will be discussed at all Regional Horse Programs in 2006.

## Feeding Your Horse in Winter

By: M. Hathaway, PhD, U of M

18°F the horse requires an additional 1% energy in their diet. The question then becomes, what is the best source of additional dietary energy during the cold winter months? A horse manages to utilize the dietary energy in the winter to keep warm in a couple of different ways. First, there is the heat given off as a by-product of normal metabolic processes. Secondly, there is the heat generated from microbial fermentation of forages that occurs in the hindgut during digestion. Many people believe that feeding more concentrates (because they are energy dense), will help keep the horse warmer.

However, there isn't as much heat produced as a by-product of digestion, absorption and utilization of grains as there is from the microbial fermentation of forages. Consequently increasing the amount of forage in the diet will help meet the increasing energy needs and will result in an increase in microbial fermentation which will help keep the horse warm. For example, if a 1000 lb horse needed 16 lbs of good-quality hay each day when the temperature was 18°F, its requirement could be expected to increase by approximately 2 – 2.5 lbs to 18 -18.5 lbs if the temperature

dropped to 0°F. The increased dietary energy requirement would be even greater if the horse didn't have access to shelter. An additional very important point to consider is the need to provide access to clean, "warm" (45° - 64° F) water. A horse will require a lot more water when eating dried feedstuffs like hay, compared to horses grazing on lush pasture. If the water is ice cold, the horse will not drink as much. The goal should always be to maximize water consumption to help prevent the possibility of dehydration and colic.