



U of M Horse Newsletter

Providing research-based information to Minnesota Horse Owners

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Riding a Cushing's Horse

By: Julie Wilson, DVM, U of M

Recently, we have received several questions regarding riding and exercising horses with Cushing's Syndrome.

First, it is important to work with your veterinarian to ensure the safety and well-being of your horse. Generally speaking, horses with Cushing's can be ridden like any other horse, particularly if the disease is well controlled with medication. Still, it is wise to consider just a few precautions:

1. Overheating - if the affected horse has not shed out, a body clip may be needed to keep the horse cool during exercise. Appropriate medical treatment for the disease will also facilitate more normal and timely hair coat growth.

Ask the Expert

Q: What can I use in my fogger to control flies in my horse barn? I have tempo and Sevin on hand.

A: First, check to see if there are screens on barn entryways (i.e. windows and doors). If so, then try to keep horses inside when flies and mosquitoes are most active. Avoidance is always a good strategy, provided indoors is not the source of flies, especially stable flies.

Remember, fogging indoors will be temporary at best, and futile if flies can get inside from outdoor sources. Second, make sure manure is properly disposed on, including both indoor and outdoor disposal of feces, urine-soaked bedding, and any feed source wet enough to support fly breeding. A dry environment is good, and will limit on-site production of biting stable flies and nuisance house flies.

Hand-held misters or foggers are really designed to create a fog of a short-lived, contact insecticide such as the botanicals pyrethrins. Little droplets hit the flies directly, and they are killed as the toxin enters their bodies and disrupts

2. Laminitis - if the Cushing's horse has previously foundered, it can be ridden so long as the founder has been addressed and the horse is comfortable on its feet.

3. Vision - a few horses with very advanced Cushing's can develop blindness due to impingement of the pituitary on the optic nerves. If there is any question about the horse's vision, a veterinarian should be asked to verify its vision status. Well trained horses with vision loss can very occasionally still be used for limited riding on very smooth surfaces, at a walk, or in a therapeutic riding program with a person leading the horse.

By: Roger Moon PhD, U of M

their nervous systems. Pyrethrins are likely to be formulated with various synergists to enhance efficacy, and both are quite safe around animals, pets, and people. Pyrethrins are common and should be available from local tack shops or farm supply outlet. Seek products formulated for indoor use, and **FOLLOW ALL INSTRUCTIONS** on the container.

Tempo is one of the synthetic pyrethroids, and is meant to provide a longer acting (1-2 weeks) surface residue. Comparable products with other pyrethroids are also available. These can be applied as coarse water sprays to building and stall surfaces using a hand sprayer. Check the label to confirm, but I do not think Tempo is formulated for application with a hand mister/fogger.

Sevin (carbaryl) is an organophosphate that is formulated for garden use, and I would be surprised if it is registered for premise applications against flies. Again, check the label to confirm.

Remember, the best ways to reduce fly population is with cleanliness.

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Upcoming Events

FALL REGIONAL HORSE OWNER PROGRAMS

More information next month

Saturday, October 4th

Morris, MN

12:30 pm to 4:00 pm

Saturday, October 18th

Bemidji, MN

12:30 pm to 4:00 pm

Saturday, October 25th

Two Harbors, MN

12:30 pm to 4:00 pm

Saturday, November 22nd

Cambridge, MN

9:00 am to 12:30 pm

CRP AND HORSE HAY

The USDA recently released 24 million acres of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land. However, horse owners should be leery of purchasing CRP hay. CRP land can include weeds and small trees (some of which are poisons to horses), and most likely will be low quality hay, but may be less expensive. If purchasing hay from CRP land for horse use, inspect the bales carefully for poisonous plants, and have the hay tested for nutritional quality.



Unwanted Horses Continued

By: Tracy Turner, DVM, Anoka Equine

As we continue to think about the issue of slaughter and the unwanted horse, we see it is much more than “to slaughter or not to slaughter”. It is the unwanted horse that is the problem. A coalition of the horse industry has come together to try and work on the issue. The Unwanted Horse Coalition is a broad alliance of equine organizations that have joined together under the American

Horse Council.

The mission of the Unwanted Horse Coalition is to reduce the number of unwanted horses and to improve their welfare through education and the efforts of organizations committed to the health, safety, and responsible care and disposition of these horses. The goal is that through education, they can eliminate the unwanted horse within the next 10 to 15 years. By

eliminating the unwanted horse, there will be no need for slaughter. Passing legislation that does not address the real problems will only endanger the welfare of the horse.

To contact the Unwanted Horse Coalition go to: www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org.

To contact the American Horse Council, go to: www.horsecouncil.org.

Minnesota Horse Council’s Position on Processing of Horses

The Minnesota Horse Council (MHC) advocates the humane treatment of all horses and believes the equine industry and horse owners have a responsibility to provide humane care throughout the life of the horse. However, a small percentage of horses are ultimately unwanted because they are no longer serviceable, are infirm, dangerous, or their owners are no longer able to care for them.

The MHC believes that the processing of unwanted horses is a necessary aspect of the equine industry at this time. Further, the MHC recognizes that the slaughter of horses provides a humane

alternative for the horse with chronic discomfort and pain, or inadequate care and abandonment.

The MHC believes that education regarding responsible ownership and management of horses will reduce the number of unwanted horses. In this respect, the MHC has joined and financially supports the Unwanted Horse Coalition. The MHC is the only state horse council that has taken this step. The MHC has financially supported and commends the efforts of equine retirement facilities and adoption groups.

The MHC’s position on horses destined for processing, is these

horses MUST be:

- Treated humanely and with dignity.
- Transported to the processing facility according to the guidelines approved by the United States Department of Agriculture in 2002. We further support the proposed 2008 amendments to the 2002 guidelines.
- Euthanized in a humane manner in accordance with the guidelines established by the American Veterinary Medical Association.

For more information on the MHC and their position on Transportation and Processing of Horses, go to: www.mnhorsecouncil.org. *Authors: MN Horse Council Board of Directors*

Foal Rib Fractures

By: The National Institute for Animal Agriculture

Rib fractures in foals may be occurring more frequently than previously thought. That’s the conclusion of a University Of Montreal study. The study also revealed that ultrasonography is more effective than radiography for detecting rib fractures in foals.

During physical, radiographic and ultrasonographic examinations on 29 Thoroughbred foals admitted to an emergency unit for reason other than thoracic trauma, researchers found that 69 percent had at least one rib fracture.

Fillies had almost twice as many fractures than colts, and fractures were often occurring on the left side. Researchers believe these variances are due to the difference in thoracic cage flexibility between genders and positioning during parturition (labor).

Although x-rays showed some foals without a fracture, ultrasonography revealed a different story. The more sensitive technique found fractures in 82% of the foals that looked normal on x-rays. Moreover, ultrasonography enabled

researchers to identify additional rib abnormalities not visible on radiographs.

Researchers contend that ultrasonography justifies its routine use, calling it the “gold standard” technique in diagnosing rib fractures in neonatal foals.

For additional information on this study, see the March 2007 issue of the *Equine Veterinary Journal*.