



# U of M Horse Newsletter

Providing research-based information to Minnesota Horse Owners

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Volume 5, Issue 4

April 2009



## Come See U of M Faculty at the Horse Expo

Date &	Topic	Speaker
<b>Friday, April 24th</b>		
2:30, 4:00 & 5:30 pm	Interact with U of M veterinarians while touring of the U of M Equine Center. The tour will focus on sports medicine. <b>Bus stop is located north of the Expo ticket booth on Liggett St. Passes available at the U of M booth and bus stop.</b>	
Noon	<i>"To Breed or Not to Breed"</i> <i>Economic and genetic factors to consider before breeding.</i>	Dr. S. Madill
1:00 pm	<i>"Equine Economics—Caring for Horses During a Recession"</i> <i>Cost saving approaches to aid budget minded owners.</i>	Dr. K. Martinson
<b>Saturday, April 25th</b>		
10:00 am 11:30, 1:00 & 2:30pm	Interact with U of M veterinarians while touring of the U of M Equine Center. The tour will focus on sports medicine. <b>Bus stop is located north of the Expo ticket booth on Liggett St. Passes available at the U of M booth and bus stop.</b>	
11:00 am	<i>"Optimizing Hay Feeding &amp; Storage"</i> <i>Recommended strategies for feeding and reducing waste.</i>	Dr. K. Martinson
Noon	<i>"Role of Veterinary Specialists in Horse Care"</i> <i>Learn about equine veterinary specialist and how to access them.</i>	Dr. S. Valberg
11:00 am	<i>"Is My Horse Lame?"</i> <i>How to find and treat the source of lameness.</i>	Dr. M. Boyce
<b>Sunday, April 26th</b>		
Noon	<i>"Equine Economics—Caring for Horses During a Recession"</i> <i>Cost saving approaches to aid budget minded owners.</i>	Dr. J. Wilson
1:00 pm	<i>"Jump Start"</i> <i>Introducing your horse to jumping.</i>	L. Borgia

## Webinar Series on Genetics to Begin in April

Beginning in April, a new webinar series will be offered to bring horse enthusiasts the most up-to-date information on equine genetics. The webcast series, called *Equine Genetics: A New Diagnostic Resource for Horse Owners*, is funded by a grant from the National Research Initiative. The first in a series of seven webinars, *Equine Genetics*

*101* will discuss basic genetic principles that apply to both desirable traits and diseases. How genetic testing is used by veterinarians, and applications to breeding programs will also be discussed. The first webinar will be presented on April 22 at noon (central time) by Molly McCue, DVM, PhD. For more information, go to [www.extension.umn.edu/horse](http://www.extension.umn.edu/horse)

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### Up Coming Events

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

Wednesday April 22  
Noon

"Equine Genetics"

Co-sponsored by My Horse University

There is no charge to join the webinar, but registration is required by April 21. To register, go to [www.myhorseuniversity.com/genetics](http://www.myhorseuniversity.com/genetics).

#### University of Minnesota Equine Faculty to Present at the MN Horse Expo

April 24, 25, and 26  
St. Paul Fairgrounds

Visit our booth in the Cattle Barn (#615)

#### Fall Regional Horse Owner Programs

Saturday, October 3rd  
U of M Equine Center  
St. Paul, MN

Saturday, October 24th  
Red Horse Ranch Arena  
Fergus Falls, MN



## Reading a Feed Tag

Not all horses need grain. However, there are times when a horse needs additional nutrients or energy beyond what a daily supply of hay can provide. Deciding on what type of grain, feed, or nutritional supplements to buy can be confusing. The decision can be easier by learning how to interpret the feed tag or label on the bag.

By law, certain information must be on the feed tag. Reviewing the product's name and product's purpose statement is a good starting point for making a selection. It will indicate what type of horse the feed is intended for. For example, is it developed for a maintenance horse, a rapidly growing weanling, or a senior horse? That information alone may be enough to narrow down a feed choice. However, there is additional information on the tag that will allow horse owners to make more informed decisions.

The required guaranteed analysis must include the percent of crude protein, crude fiber, and crude fat in the feed. Also listed is the minimum and maximum amount of calcium, as well as the minimum amounts of phosphorus, copper, zinc, selenium and vitamin A in the feed. The horse owner should become familiar with the general requirements for the

By: Marcia Hathaway, PhD, Univ. of MN

horse the grain is intended. The guaranteed analysis information can then be used to choose between feeds.

For example, a horse in light exercise might need maintenance feed only containing 10% crude protein. A young, rapidly growing weanling might require a feed containing 14 to 16% crude protein. If the horse has trouble maintaining weight, consider a feed containing less fiber and more fat, since fat contains more calories. Alternatively, if the horse is senior and has difficulty chewing long stem forages, choose a complete feed that includes the horse's entire fiber requirement. Some horses have a preference for the form of the feed. The tag should list if the feed is textured, pelleted or extruded.

Ingredients are typically listed in the order from greatest to least amount. Some ingredients are listed specifically, while others fit into general categories like "processed grain by-products". This gives the manufacturer flexibility to select from a list of possible ingredients that can fulfill a particular role. This allows the manufacturer to keep costs down by selecting the most economical ingredients and to avoid having to rewrite the feed tag each time ingredients change.

Not all of the information important to the horse owner is listed on the feed tag. A very important aspect of horse nutrition is the energy content of the complete ration being fed. Energy content, quality/bioavailability of feeds, or specific amounts of any one ingredient are not commonly listed on a feed tag.

It is important for horse owners to understand how much feed a horse requires. The recommended guidelines on the feed tag should be followed in order to satisfy a horse's nutritional needs. Even though commercially prepared horse feeds may seem expensive, horse owners should not top-dress or dilute the feed by adding other less expensive grains or feed additives to the commercial ration in order to make it last longer. Doing so will disrupt the calculated nutritional balance of the ration.

The name and address of the manufacturer is listed on the feed tag with contact information in case horse owners have questions. Although the date of manufacture is listed on the tag, that information may be encoded and is not easily discernable by the purchaser. It can be useful when contacting the manufacturer. Forage should be the backbone of your horse's diet. Grain and feed supplements should only be added when additional nutrient and energy is required, as is the case for working, growing, and reproducing horses.

## Ask the Expert

Q: I have an older gelding and 2 goats. They get along very well and are good companions. My problem is that the goats are eating the geldings tail hair. I have tried two different sprays, but the goats continue. I'm wondering if there is something else I could do?

A: First of all, evaluate the goat's diet and make sure it is not deficient in vitamins or minerals. Goats are browsers by nature and need to

keep their mouths and minds busy. If you cannot, or do not want to, separate the animals, consider options, both home-made and commercial, that will make the horse's tail taste bad.

Home-made options include a mixture of dish soap and water, Vaseline and cayenne pepper, or Listerine. Hot pepper and Listerine should not be applied to or near the skin, just to the tail hairs that are

By: Christie Ward, DVM and Julie Wilson, DVM, Univ. of MN

within the goat's reach. Use gloves when mixing and applying the remedy. Commercial options include "Bitter Apple", "McNasty", or a foul smelling/tasting conditioner.

There are no guarantees that any of these remedies will work. If you do find something that works, persistence and continued application will probably be needed to continue to deter the goats.