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Inside this Issue

Contributor Biographies	4
President's Message	5
News & Newsworthy	6
Heart to Heart – Britta Jacobson	8
Planting a Horse Friendly Garden – Gwen Kilchherr	10
Elizabeth Palmer and Mike Harkins	11
Where East Meets West	12
Banning Brown M&Ms – Yvette Koth	14
Gone Away / Ron Malone	15
Trivia – Jennifer Forsberg Meyer	16
Listen, Learn, Laugh and Enjoy – Patti Schofler	18
Social Media/Its Effect on Our Young Riders – Melissa Kalember	20
Your Disaster Plan: One is Never Enough – Julie Atwood	22
Keepin' It Cool – Amy Young	25
Is There a Tubby in Your Barn? – Amy Housman	26
Horses Have Their Own Coronavirus – Michelle Beko, DVM	28
Nuture and Nature – Mary Taft-McPhee and Sam Durham	29



Cover Photo: John O'Hara Photography

Six-week-old orphaned Clydesdale colt Kiskasen rises up from a pasture nap, knowing he is safe with his foster family and nurse mother, reining champion Quarter Horse Whiz Ms Dolly, at Bennett Valley Ranch.

Likely Kiskasen will soon outgrow the 14.1 hand mare, and shed his foal coat to reveal his true color, black. Of the approximately 600 Clydesdales born in the U.S. each year, most are bay.

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CONTRIBUTORS



Britta Jacobson was born in a small northern German town where she was certified as a dental technician. She spent many years competing in Germany in an English saddle.

Today the Santa Rosa resident competes in West Coast Reining Horse Association and National Reining Horse Association (NRHA) events. She has taken home many awards, all on her homebred and raised horses from competitions including the National Reining Horse Breeders Classic in Katy, Texas, the NRHA Futurity, Oklahoma City and shows in Canada.

Most days you will find Britta and her husband Ted enjoying the Sonoma lifestyle on their Bennett Valley Ranch, where every horse on the ranch has been born and raised.



Gwen Kilchherr is a long time Sonoma County landscape consultant and designer. She hosts the Saturday morning KSRO 1350 AM "Garden Talk" show and authors the Q&A garden column in the Press Democrat, "The Garden Doctors." Gwen is a Sonoma County California Dressage society member and has volunteered at many of their events and shows. She and her warmblood mare, Cleo, are working with trainer Lori Cook and moving up to Second Level dressage.



Yvette Koth, owner of Back2Front Dressage, is a classical dressage trainer & coach serving Marin and Sonoma. Her focus is primarily on the rehabilitative and protective gymnastizing of the horse, ensuring correct development and the best chance for long-term soundness. A native of Germany, she also writes about and translates all things equine, including the book "Neapolitano Nima I – The White Diamond" for the Spanish Riding School in Vienna. She holds a master of arts degree. from San Jose State University.



Jennifer Forsberg Meyer is an award-winning journalist and author. Currently she is a senior editor with *Horse & Rider* magazine. Jennifer lives in rural Latrobe, CA with her husband, Hank, and the family's assorted animals.



Patti Schofler is the managing editor of the *Horse Journal*, a publicist and freelance writer for national equestrian sports magazines. She began her writing career as a reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* and is author of the Lyons Press book on Arabian horses *Flight Without Wings*. Passionate about journalism and dressage, art and travel,

she is a graduate of the USDF L Judges Education Program and trains her eight-year-old PRE Toledano.



Melissa Kalember is a U.S. Equestrian Federation R judge, Sacramento Area Hunter Jumper Association judge, equine masseuse and intuitive trainer at (707) 363-1258 or melissa@kalemberequine.com



Julie Atwood is a lifelong equestrienne, member of multiple community animal disaster response teams, a trained animal rescue technician, and recipient of two Federal Emergency Management Agency Individual and Community Preparedness Awards. She is a resident of Glen Ellen and a speaker at meetings, workshops, and conferences around the state.



Amy Young is the equine outreach manager at the University of California, Davis, (UCD), Center for Equine Health. After completing her master of science in genetics at UCD, she spent several years researching genetics and health of companion animals, horses, and livestock at the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine and Department of Animal Science. She is a hunter rider and a judge for the Sacramento Area Hunter Jumper Association, Interscholastic Equestrian Association and Intercollegiate Horse Shows Association. Information about the Center for Equine Health is available at <https://ceh.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/>.



Amy Housman, a native of Forestville, is the animal and equine science program coordinator and an instructor at Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC). She grew up riding eventers and jumpers until she went to college where she fell in love with cow horses in Cal Poly's equine unit. Amy has a master's degree in animal science from Fresno State University, where she studied insulin resistance in horses. She worked in the animal nutrition industry for eight years before coming home to teach at SRJC. She enjoys riding her Quarter Horse mare Moose.



Michelle Beko, DVM, has been an equine veterinarian since 1991. She enjoys spending time with her husband and daughter, eventing her horse Zeke, hiking and traveling. She can be reached at Empire Equine, (707) 545-3903. www.empire-equine.com



Mary Taft-McPhee is a farrier based in Port Orchard, Washington, who works part time in Sonoma County. Prior to entering the trade, she worked in San Francisco as a data scientist and in New York as a bond trader. She enjoys spending time with her retired polo ponies, Frenchie and Bayita.



Sam Durham, CJF, DWCF, (Durham Farrier Service, Hoof Pathology and Therapeutic Shoeing) has been a farrier for nearly 25 years. He spent several years training with seven-time world champion and 5th generation farrier Bob Marshall. Sam participates in continuing education programs and competitions. He was one of the first ten farriers in the United States to test with the UK's Worshipful Company of Farriers and achieved his DWCF designation from the 700 year old organization.

If you are interested in writing for the Horse Journal, please contact Editor Patti Schofler editor@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

GETTING OUR RIGS OUT OF THE MUD AND BACK ON THE ROAD

What a crazy time in which we find ourselves. Who could have imagined that a virus could land on our shores and in a matter of weeks cause such an upheaval in our daily lives? While some of us have memories of the polio epidemic from our childhoods, that certainly hasn't lingered in our minds as a blueprint of how modern life can be altered at a moment's notice.

We are privileged to live in a time of good modern medical capabilities and outfits like the Centers for Disease Control that not only keep us in much better health but also give us a sense of security that comes with not always having to fend off strange afflictions on our own. And yet, here we have been bunkered in and watching who we associate with and under what circumstances.

My name is Henry Beaumont and I was recently elected president by the board of the Sonoma County Horse Council. I am a native son of Sonoma County, having grown up in Healdsburg on a combination Jersey dairy and prune ranch along the Russian River south of town.

While I've experienced the county through many ups and downs, this time at least services have been available at reasonable levels for our equine world with many providers having been deemed "essential". But that does not salve the financial wounds that have clobbered every level of society, leaving many of us to wonder just how the process of returning to a successful economy is going to work out. It is going to be a trying process, for sure.

But one thing about the horse community: it is full of smart, thoughtful, and self-starting people who are accustomed to getting their rigs out of the mud and back on the road. And I believe that our 'can do' attitude will not only serve us well but

will allow us to be leaders in the North Bay in the effort to get the economy moving again.

Setting doom and gloom aside, we see the sun is shining and we are into summer. If you haven't already done so, it's time to saddle up and enjoy our horses.

It's back to the fun of competition and out to our beautiful countryside. Thanks to Bert Whitaker and the able staff at Sonoma County Regional Parks, the trails have opened. Just remember to keep your distances as a crowded park may result in a closed park.

I greatly appreciate the confidence that the board has shown in me and look forward to the opportunity to grow the Council's service to the horse community and see our membership flourish. Please feel free to reach out via president@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org with any ideas about the horse council and our future together.

Henry Beaumont
President, Sonoma County Horse Council



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News & Newsworthy



Kelley Holly, coach of Tambourine Vaulters in Petaluma, was awarded the North Bay Spirit Award, sponsored by the Press Democrat and Comcast NBCU. Holly is a U.S. Equestrian Federation and American Vaulting Association "R" judge.

SRJC Equine Science Online

With uncertainty about the ability to offer in-person labs, the **Santa Rosa Junior College Animal Science and Equine Science** course offerings are moving to 2021 spring semester and will include Basic Equine Science, Farrer Science and Stable Management.

In the meantime, the Animal Science program is offering two online courses. Livestock Feeding and Nutrition covers digestive anatomy and physiology, types of grains and hays, and strategies for managing animal diets. Basic Animal Science covers the management of livestock and horses. Email Amy Housman at ahousman@santarosa.edu with any questions.

Equi-Ed Drive Through Challenge Unites Students and Horses

On May 23, after weeks of isolation away from the lessons and horses, special-needs students visited the nonprofit Equi-Ed facility to take part in the Great Equi-Ed Drive Through Challenge.

Executive Director **Maxine Freitas**, her staff, and volunteers have carried out the essential work to keep the Equi-Ed horses fed, cared for, exercised, and happy. However, without a way to keep a six-foot social distance among the student, horse handlers, side walkers, and mounting assistants, lessons were suspended.



Photo: Marcie Lewis Photography

Instead students were offered a chance to drive through Equi-Ed and do an activity that allowed them to see the horses without getting out of their cars. Students and their parents or guardians were given a ten-question challenge that called for stopping at each horse's location to figure out that horse's name and to perform an activity, such as throwing apples and carrots through pool floats, hula hoops, and basketball nets. At the final stop of the

low-speed loop around the property, students posed for a photo with Equi-Ed pony Charlotte. Volunteers used grabber tools to hand out award bags containing posters to color, a horse-themed face mask, and a horse head paper mask with decorative stickers.

Equi-Ed's mission is "enhancing lives through the therapeutic power of the horse." www.equi-ed.org.

—Jan Kahdeman

ON THE MOVE

Eventer David Adamo has moved his business to San Lorenzo Ranch, 7750 Martinelli Road, Forestville, California.



Petaluma Equine veterinarians Daizie Labelle and Sarah Puchalski have assumed ownership of Circle Oak Rehabilitation in Petaluma, founded in 2008 by Ron and Sarah Malone, and have incorporated it into the veterinary hospital, which is now known as Petaluma Equine. Petaluma Equine's team of veterinarians also includes Drs. Courtney Lewis, Jamie Kerr, Zoe Davidson, and surgeon Russ Sakai. The staff includes Rehab Program Coordinator Kari Farley and MRI technician Krissy Collett, both of whom remain as key members of the practice.

Petaluma Equine, 911 Mustang Court, focuses on primary and emergency care as well as referral service to equine veterinarians for surgical procedures, advance imaging and rehabilitation, and access to consulting specialists. Petaluma Equine offers telemedicine and an online pharmacy at www.petalumaequine.com and on-site and ambulatory appointments. 707-721-4402



Sunland Equine celebrates its first anniversary in Sonoma County. Owned and operated by Drake and Kate Swett, the Santa Rosa equine fitness and rehabilitation facility employs a four-horse Eurociser, Artemis Class IV Laser, and Hudson Aquatics AquaPacer, an above ground water treadmill, to custom design programs for individual horses and their rehabilitation needs.

Found at 4483 Sunland Avenue, the facility also offers nebulizer treatment and ice therapy. Furthermore, during the 2020 breeding season Sunland has provided mare care and scheduling for Dr. Jim Meyers of Gold Coast Equine. 707-217-2015



Ighani Sporthorses have made their home at Baywood Equestrian Center in Fairfax, California, moving from Toyon Farm in Napa. Daniel and Susan continue to train and compete, he with jumpers, she with dressage horses.



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HEART to HEART

A QUARTER HORSE MARE FOSTERS A CLYDESDALE FOAL

By Britta Jacobson

On April 9, in Shingle Springs, Clydesdale mare Nakita gave birth to a healthy colt who sprung up and searched his mother for milk. Owners Carl and Kristen Absher drove over to the vet clinic that cool spring night to welcome the new arrival and returned home smiling. Early April 10, at 4:19 a.m., the vet called with the sad news that the mare died.

The warm spring evening of April 10, 130 miles away, in Santa Rosa, Quarter Horse mare Whiz Ms Dolly nuzzled her new born, but it wouldn't move. I blew into the large foal's nose, trying to get it to breathe. No response. The baby was still born.

I was so sad. The lost foal was incredible. She was big and gorgeous with amazing coloring. It was only right that something good should still come from this disappointment. Without hesitation, without yet grieving for the loss of what should have been a fourth generation of my home-bred champion reining horses, I posted on Facebook, "We have a nurse mare."

This was not my first walk in the park. I knew what someone else would be up against with an orphan. I had lost a mare who colicked after foaling and I bottle raised the baby with goat's milk, Foal-Lac Pellets, everything that's out there. You have to feed them every two hours, day and night. It takes considerable time to



At three weeks old, Kiskasen demonstrates his athletic ability and good health as he shows off in the pasture. Mature Clydesdales weigh between 1600 and 2400 pounds, as much as a Volkswagen Beetle. A newborn foal can weigh 110-180 pounds and gain up to four pounds a day for the first few months.



Photo: John O'Hara Photography

After six weeks together, clearly baby Kiskasen and foster mama Whiz Ms Dolly are both thriving. Seventeen-year-old Whiz Ms Dolly was the 2008 West Coast Reining Horse Association Snaffle Bit Year End Champion before heading into the breeding barn.

prepare each meal and to feed the baby. Maybe you get an hour of rest between feedings.

A Facebook match worked not in the way one would expect. A couple from Shingle Springs, 130 miles away, had lost their mare in foaling and posted on Facebook that they were looking for a nurse mare and Ryan Fowler of Silverline Silversmiths put us together.

We talked. The foal owners were hesitant. I warned them of my experience with an orphan. Kristen laughs when she recalls the phone call from me. I said to her, "If you want a nurse mare, I suggest you pack up your foal right now and get down here." I gave her more of a command than a suggestion and Kristen said it was exactly what she and her husband needed to hear. As soon as the foal Kiskasen was okay to travel, they loaded him up and headed for Santa Rosa.

Neither of us had talked about breeds.

To clarify directions, the Abshers called when they were about ten minutes from Ted and my Bennett Valley ranch. "Oh, and by the way, what breed is the foal?" I asked.

"Clydesdale," Kristen said.

Whiz Ms Dolly is a 14.1 hand Quarter Horse reining mare.

The foal's dam Nakita was an 18.1 hand black Clydesdale.

When he got out of the trailer, I was shocked. I had never seen a baby Clydesdale. He was giant at only 12 hours old.

But we had no time to waste on those kinds of details. Before they arrived, I had put Whiz in the pasture with an eight-year-old mare named Ms. Benz. She was Whiz's first foal. We were trying to trick Whiz, like she was going out for grass for a few hours with her daughter, and "oh, look, the foal is still in the stall."

We took baby Kiskasen to the foaling stall and rubbed him down with the Whiz's placenta, in an attempt to fool her. We then laid the placenta over his back, hoping he wouldn't look quite so big.

Whiz came into the stall and gave the foal dirty looks. She squealed. I held the placenta up to Whiz's nose while nonplused Kiskasen went over to his new mom and nursed. And that was it.

Photo: John O'Hara Photography



Photo: Patti Schofler

Actually, it happened pretty quick, only a few minutes.

Today, the mom and baby are pretty much like a regular mare and foal, except for the appearance which can be a bit funny. The mare is a small, feminine, quick moving cutting horse type. Her adopted son is more like a lumberjack thundering through the pasture. We nicknamed him Thor. He is cute as a button, and so relaxed. When he lies down to sleep you can sit on him. He doesn't care.

To socialize him with other horses, I turn him and mom out with another mare. We want him to have the whole horse experience. One of the problems with orphans is that because people pamper them, they don't learn to be horses. Without structure, they can become dangerous.

For a guy that lost his mother, he seems to really like moms. He's even tried to nurse on the other mare, and she's never had a baby. The mares trade responsibilities for the big guy. When Whiz is tired of him, auntie watches and looks after him.

People ask me if I am going to keep "Thor", but he doesn't belong to me. I think the owners would like to wean him at four months which is a good idea. At some point he won't be able to nurse because he's so big.

Looking back on how this worked out, I've realized you don't think. You react. It went so fast. I really just wanted to help out. My mare would have been fine and she was comfortable with her horse family. But we had to do it so a baby could survive.

Even when Kiskasen (Thor) loads up and travels back to Shingle Springs, I don't think it will be over, not if what I envision comes to fruition.

2023 Super Bowl. Budweiser commercial. A black Clydesdale with a wagon behind him. A white picket fence. Green Sonoma County pastures. Kiskasen has come to see his mama. Running along the fence is a little red Quarter Horse mare. 🐾



Photo: John O'Hara Photography



Photo: Britta Jacobson

Nicknamed Thor, the baby Clydesdale has a busy day dining, playing and resting. Horse Journal editor Patti Schofler stops by to meet the youngster.



The foster family and owners celebrate the successful match of nurse mare Whiz Ms Dolly and three-week-old orphan foal Kiskasen. From left: Sonoma County reining horse breeder and NRHA no-pro competitor Britta Jacobson and foal owners Carl and Kristen Absher. Photo: John O'Hara Photography



Planting a Horse Friendly Garden

By Gwen Kilchherr

Summer is a perfect time to enhance and beautify those areas around the barn that need a landscape facelift. What's missing or needs attention? A transition area between the walkways and barn entrance? Maybe the addition of color next to the sitting area to make it more inviting for boarders and guests? What should you consider when planning for new plantings near your paddocks, pastures, entryways, and walkways?

A well-designed and planned landscape design can add beauty and increased value to the stable, as well as support water conservation, minimize the potential of pollutants getting into waterways, and aid in fire resistance. The goal you have for your landscape will determine what plants you use. Take time to look around, observe, take notes, and make sketches.

Before placing any plants in your stable's landscape, be aware that many popular plants are poisonous to horses. Refer to: <https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/horse-plant-list>, for a complete list.

Have a few plants in mind? By researching those plants, you'll know where the best place will be to plant them. A general guideline is to place taller plants towards the back along a building, or to the north if in an open space, followed by medium height plants in front of the taller ones, and low growing plants in the front of them and along borders.



Flowers brighten up this feed room.

Need to add a little splash of color to delineate your walkway from the barn entrance? Will the addition of a flower bed in that corner do the trick? There are a wide variety of plants that can add color, texture, and beauty to the exterior of your barn. California poppies reseed themselves beautifully and provide free plants every year. Monkey flower invites hummingbirds to the barn. Black-eyed susans and purple coneflowers draw in the butterflies.

Roof overhangs are an ideal place for hanging baskets overflowing with colorful impatiens, geraniums, or verbena. You'll just have to remember to water the baskets regularly, especially if they get more sun than shade. Hanging baskets, colorful containers, sidewalk borders, and planted garden areas certainly improve the

barn atmosphere for existing clients and may catch the attention of potential clients.

Native and drought tolerant plants are frequently used as they don't require as much water as annuals, which add a lot of color and texture but require a lot of maintenance and water. The many different species of manzanita and salvia will add color and character. California fescue and deergrass look beautiful year-round and add a sense of movement to the landscape. The hundreds of varieties of succulents don't need you to fuss over them.

Use an organic mulch made from your composted horse manure and kitchen scraps in the planting beds to improve the soil, hold water during the hot months, suppress weed growth, and prevent rain water from eroding the soil. For added fire safety, use this mulch around your flowers, then use gravel between the mulched areas and the barn to reduce the flammable fuel around your barn.

A professional garden consultant can help design and choose the best possible plants as well as provide valuable information on plant health care. Ask your nursery person at your favorite nursery for recommendations.

From Table to Trough: Fruits and Vegetables for Your Horse

When planting your fruit and vegetable garden this year, include what suits your horses' palate by also growing what he likes to eat. You buy your horse fresh apples, beets, carrots from the grocery store, right? Why not grow their favorite fruits and veggies organically, yourself?

Many of the vegetables you eat horses also love to eat. Did you know beet greens are very tasty and nutritious for horses? Some of the easiest veggies to grow for horses are beets, carrots, cucumbers, green beans, pumpkins, summer squash, and turnips. For a selection of sweet fruits if you have the space to grow them, include apples, citrus, grapes, and pears. We can't forget the real horse pleasers blueberries, strawberries, cantaloupe, honeydew, peaches and watermelon. Remove seeds and pits. Most horses love to eat the rind and the pulp, so have them enjoy the whole thing.

Stay away from broccoli, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, kale, and other gas-causing vegetables. Some horses enjoy and tolerate them, but there have been reported cases of colic from eating these vegetables.

To improve your soil and increase yields in the vegetable garden, work in some composted manure, not fresh, into the soil early in the season and again in the fall. During the growing season, you can sprinkle a thin layer of composted manure on top of the soil, and as it continues to break down, it will slowly add more nutrients.

Creating a beautiful landscaped garden for yourself and your horse, and even for boarders, friends and visitors, is very satisfying and is a great way to connect with nature. Take the time to step back, breathe, relax, and enjoy. It also gives you the satisfaction knowing how to grow food and treats organically, and you know exactly what you and your equine friends are eating and enjoying.

How to Grow Carrots

Homegrown carrots are a popular, long lasting root vegetable full of flavor and texture. There are many varieties to choose from, they are easy to grow, and they do well in many climates.

Proper soil preparation is extremely important for carrot growing. If the carrot roots can't easily grow unobstructed, it can lead to stunted and misshapen crops. Before sowing, incorporate a little compost into the planting area.

Carrot seeds can be sown anytime from early spring through late fall and do best in a location that receives full sunlight.

Sow the seed ¼ inch deep, three to four inches apart in rows one foot apart. Sow seeds directly in the garden or containers. Do not transplant. Cover the seeds with a thin layer of soil or compost. For multiple harvests, you can sow seeds about every two to three weeks.



Photo: Hannah Beebe

The heck with those roses. On his 20th birthday Goliath only cares about the carrots.

Keep the soil moist with frequent waterings. To help the small carrot seeds to germinate, you don't want the soil to form a hard crust on top. Check the soil moisture by sticking your finger an inch into the soil. The soil should be moist but not wet.

Carrots are slow to germinate. Be patient. As they may take two to three weeks to germinate, don't panic if your carrots aren't popping up right away.

When the seedlings are an inch tall, thin them so that they are three to four inches apart. Snip them off to the ground with scissors. Do not pull them out as this will cause damage to the fragile carrots next to those you pulled out.

Be careful not to disturb the young carrots' roots while weeding.

Depending on the variety you chose, they may take anywhere from two to four months to mature and be ready to harvest when you will be able to see the top part of the carrot showing through the soil. A few delicious, sweet tasting varieties to grow are- Danvers Half Long, Chantenay Red Cored, Scarlet Nantes, and Yara Yara.

You can harvest carrots at any time for both you and your horse to enjoy. When harvesting mature carrots, simply grab hold of the foliage, pull, and smile!



Photo: Patti Schofler

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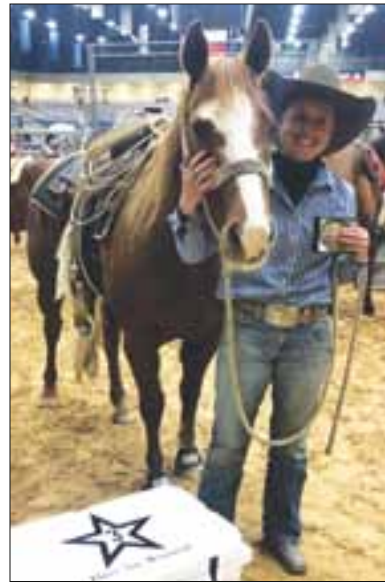




Photo: Darren Nolan

WHERE EAST MEETS WEST

Toora Nolan



Jessie Jones

"Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet" is the first line of an 1892 poem by Rudyard Kipling. If we substituted the word "east" with English and "west" with western, we might ask ourselves if Kipling's statement applies to these two seemingly different ways to enjoy horses. Or, are horses simply horses?

- In the future, if you would like us to ask Northern California experts a question, get in touch with Patti Schofler at editor@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org.

For this issue we're looking into the use of the start box in eventing, our English sport, and breakaway roping, our western discipline.

ENGLISH: No doubt cross country jumping is the favored part of the three phases of three-day eventing or horse trials (dressage, cross country jumping, and show jumping). That adventure for the horse and rider begins in the start box leading to the cross-country course. This three-sided structure allows the horse and rider to enter from the warm up area through an opening in the back and opens in the front to the course.

WESTERN: The emerging rodeo sport of breakaway roping begins for horse and rider in a three-sided start box. As in standard roping, the calf moves into a chute with spring-loaded doors. The horse and rider wait in a box next to the chute that has a spring-loaded rope, known as the barrier, stretched across the front. A light rope fastened from the chute to the calf's neck releases once the calf is well away from the chute. It also releases the barrier, giving the calf a head start. Once the barrier has released, the horse runs out of the box while the roper attempts to throw a rope around the neck of the calf. That done, the roper cues the horse to stop. Because the rope is tied to the saddle horn with a string, when the calf hits the end of the rope and slack comes out of the rope, the string breaks, the calf is free and the run ends. The rope usually has a small white flag at the end that makes the moment the rope breaks more easily seen by the timer. The fastest run wins.

Our experts are [Toora Nolan](#) and [Jessie Jones](#).

TOORA NOLAN

Growing up in Portland and living in Santa Rosa today, Toora Nolan has been riding for as long as she can remember and has competed in three-day eventing since 1994. She has trained with Anna Collier, Yves Sauvignon, and Francois Roemer and ridden in clinics regularly with American team riders David O'Connor and Jim Graham, as well as with Cadre Noir head coach Jean Luc Force. She has competed through the Intermediate and the CCI** levels in the U.S. and in France. She particularly enjoys starting young

she finished her degree and collegiate rodeo career at Panhandle State University in Goodwell, Oklahoma. In 2017, after receiving her bachelor's degree in animal science, Jessie returned to Sonoma County and worked for horse trainer Stan Fonsen who was instrumental in her growth as a horsewoman and her passion for cutting. Under his instruction, she successfully trained her first futurity horse. In 2019 she was the California Cowboys Professional Rodeo Association's Champion Breakaway Roper. This year, she won first place at the Three Star Memorial Roping in Amarillo, Texas, qualifying her to compete in the 2020 American Semi Finals.

HJ: What are the mechanics and rules of the starter box in your sport?

TOORA: Horses are sent out at two-minute intervals. If it's a bigger show and there are several horses on the course the timing may be increased to three minutes per horse. But it's the standard expectation that after the horse in front of you leaves the box to the cross country, you have two minutes before you go. Since it takes

horses under saddle and over fences, and developing them through the levels in eventing. Santa Rosa Equestrian Center has been home to Toora's Raydiance Eventing since 2005.

JESSIE JONES

Jessie spent the first 18 years of her life on her family's dairy farm in Santa Rosa. Her mother took every opportunity to put her on a horse and instilled in her a passion for horsemanship. Competing in her first rodeo when she was in the seventh grade, Jessie rose through junior and high school rodeo with help from Chris Brown and Rod Hagge. Jessie competed for two years on the rodeo team at Lassen Community College. Over the following three years,



Maddy and Jessie Jones at Three Star Memorial Breakaway Roping, Amarillo, TX

Photo: Bunkhouse Blessings Photography

maybe 15 to 30 seconds to go from warm up to the box, you have about a minute and a half to focus.

JESSIE: The box is on the right side of the chute. Some are a bit longer or shorter. You can see the calf through the chute panels. The timers are watching you. Once you are in the far corner of the box, you nod your head and they open the chute. You're in the box about two and a half minutes. If you need the more time, you can take it, but that's not ideal. It makes the timers frustrated. You want to make it as quick as possible because they're putting on a production.

HJ: What should be the horse and rider's attitudes in the box?

TOORA: The horse should be excited, but not fearful. You want them pumped up, strutting their stuff, but not nervous and worried about being taken out of the warm up area and wondering if they'll have fun out there. Since the rider's attitude is conveyed to the horse, the rider should be confident and excited, yet calm and clear headed. If the rider is anxious, the horse will wonder, "Should I be scared, too?" The rider's state of mind is especially important in the cross-country phase as the rider will need to help the horse safely negotiate solid fences that involve varied terrain and speed.

JESSIE: The success of your run begins in the box because one of the most challenging aspects of breakway is the "scoring" or how much of a head start you give the calf. There are different set ups with different lengths or scores. Some set ups have you sit longer. Others are shorter. Your goal is to not leave the box before the calf has a head start by breaking the barrier before it is released. If you break the barrier, you have 10 seconds added to your run. On the other hand, you want your horse to go out quickly. The run is two to three seconds. If you want to be under two seconds, you have to leave the box right away. It's best if your horse is quiet and flat footed.

HJ: Why does it matter what happens in the box? How do you handle your horse in the box?

TOORA: If you don't have the horse on the aids as you go from warm up area to the start box, your partnership won't be there as you are galloping on the cross-country course. So, in the box, I'm doing walk-trot transitions, changes of direction and bend, testing that my horse will keep the rhythm and respond to half halts. With green horses that have no idea what's going on in the box, I'm happy to let them stop, look around and watch the other horses canter by, so they don't feel worried when it's time to go on course. You do, however, want them clear about the driving aids. When I pick up the canter coming out of the box, I want the horse looking for its first jump instead of wondering when lunch is served.

JESSIE: My routine is I walk in, swing my rope, turn towards the chute, back into the corner, and then stand and keep quiet. Once you are in the corner, the timer will watch for you. You nod your head and then they open the chute. The ultimate goal is for the horse to leave on your hand cue. You have some tension on reins, and once you give the horse its head, the horse should fire.

HJ: How do you train for the box?

TOORA: When we go school cross country, we always school the box, no matter the level. The box has the entrance at the back and the flags in the front. You can go in and out any which way, and at any gait you want. You're not going to just shove them in and then kick them out. You want them feeling comfortable. The start box should not be that scary. They use horse friendly materials and it's not a confined space like a start gate for race horses.

JESSIE: Similar to eventing, you want to start out slowly. You can ease out of a start box by walking and not putting so much pressure on your horse. You want to make the box a happy place. Also, when starting a horse, it is very helpful to use slower cattle. Then the horse does not have to work so hard to get to the spot. Again, you are trying to avoid putting too much pressure on the horse.



Toora Nolan competes on the cross-country course at Eventful Acres at Oregon House, California.

Photo: Darren Nolan

HJ: What if there is a problem in the box?

TOORA: You can have someone walk next to the horse on the way from the warm up to the start box. That can be comforting for the horse and rider, like someone holding their hands. If you have a very excitable horse, it's sometimes better to wait at the warm up as long as possible – with permission from the ring steward - trot over to the box and get on course straightway. Another solution is to have someone lead the horse on a lunge line. Be sure the person can slip the line free when it's time to start.

At the lower levels, you don't need to come blasting out of the box at the gallop. You can trot out or walk out, and then pick up a quiet canter. If you do that in the early training process, it's relaxing and methodical and sets the horse up to be more balanced to jump the bigger fences.

Dealing with the cross-country watch while waiting for the count down from the starter can be stressful. I set my watch ahead by 10 or 15 seconds so I don't have to press my start button at the same time as I'm trying to pick up the canter out of the box and find my first fence.

JESSIE: One of the best solutions to a problem in the box is scoring. Just let the calf run out while you stay in the box. Then your horse doesn't feel the pressure on every run. 🐾

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Banning Brown M&Ms

A Lesson in Risk Management for Equestrians

By Yvette Koth



Photo: Alexas Fortas

A brown M&M attempts to hide among the many other colors.

The rock band Van Halen had extensive contracts for their concerts that specified that no brown M&Ms were to show up in the backstage area. Should one appear, the promoter would forfeit the entire show at full cost.

While on the surface this clause may seem like mere rock star antics, lead singer David Lee Roth explained that the reason for it actually was safety insurance. They traveled with what was at the time one of the most elaborate technical shows, including huge, heavy lights. To accommodate them, technical specifications had to be carefully followed to ensure that no one got hurt. If promoters didn't fully read the contract and understand the specs, the band and crew were in danger. The no-brown-M&Ms clause was an indicator of whether the promoter was paying proper attention to detail.

A horse trainer has a duty to act as a guardian of details. Safety for all involved—students, horses, and others in the vicinity—is the primary responsibility. This means that, firstly, the trainer should model appropriate safety behavior. But it also requires being explicit about adhering to best practices, even at the expense of sounding old fashioned or being annoying. There are few professions that would accept bad risk management practices as par for the course.

Have a look around the barn for brown M&Ms, those telltale signs of a lax attitude toward or lack of knowledge about safety. Take this true story. A novice horse owner asked an experienced barn mate for advice on how to deworm her horse. The experienced person was happy to oblige and demonstrated it on her horse, sticking her right hand underneath the halter, holding the horse's head, while quickly squirting the dewormer in the mouth with the left. When the novice went to do the same with her horse, he reared up, lifting her off the ground with her hand stuck

underneath halter. As luck would have it no one was hurt.

It's easy to fault the barn mate, but had the novice read up on the subject, she would have known how dangerous it is to get anything that's attached to a horse tangled around any part of the body. This especially goes for lunge lines and lead ropes. Other typical examples of brown M&Ms include, but are not limited to the following:

- Not wearing a helmet: head injuries are common in riding accidents and can have dire long-term consequences.
- Improper footwear is risky. Sneakers or flip-flops have no business around horses unless you're ok with having toes or the entire foot amputated.
- Leading or tying a horse with English stirrups down can become a trap for a horse's hoof or teeth, leading to a broken neck or leg.
- Lunging without wearing gloves is a rope burn or severed finger waiting to happen.
- An open arena gate is an escape route for a runaway horse. Not only can the horse and/or rider fall and get injured, he can also cause a ruckus on his way back to the barn or run onto a road.
- Unsafe trailering practices such as opening the butt bar before untying the horse can result in serious injury to horse and handlers.
- The horse that should have been lunged can easily become a catapult.
- Ignoring the horse's signals when he is trying to tell you that he is afraid of or ill prepared for a particular task is asking for trouble.
- Tying a horse to a gate or any movable object rarely ends well as it can get dragged should the horse pull back, further panicking the horse.
- The horse that has never learned to stand quietly for mounting is a safety risk, not a fun agility test.
- Inappropriately matched horse and rider pairs can miscommunicate to the point where accidents happen.
- Turning to force to fill in training holes can lead to risky, unsafe behavior such as rearing, bolting, and bucking, as well as further training problems.



Photo: Patti Schofler

Bare toes and horse hooves, hopefully, will never meet.





Photo: Patti Schoffer


Imagine the scenario whereby the horse is spooked by the dog resting nearby. What will happen to the hand wrapped in the lead rope?

A 2018 U.S. study* of horse-related injuries found that more than 60 percent of accidents in hindsight could have been prevented. It also found the education of the humans to be the number one actionable item.

Furthermore, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission found that horse accidents are usually serious business. "Injuries caused by horses have the highest likelihood of requiring hospitalization, a statement based on individuals visiting U.S. hospital emergency departments with injuries caused by one of the 250 recreational activities tracked. The horse riding injury admission rate to a hospital is 16.6 percent higher than the next activity, All Terrain Vehicles (ATV)/motorcycle riding at 12 percent."

Of course, there is always some risk when riding or handling horses. But imagine a workplace, or any other public space for that matter, in which roughly two-thirds of accidents can be prevented, but the causes are simply ignored. In times such as the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, extra care should be taken not to end up in a hospital, risking infection and adding strain to already strained medical resources.

Attention to detail is generally not in fashion in a world of ever shortening attention spans. It's easy to be complacent and everyone makes a mistake here and there. But if you notice a lot of brown M&Ms in your own behavior or around you, ask yourself: where does it stop? What short cuts are acceptable? How does this affect the care and training? Safe riding and horsemanship require a level of discipline and self-reflection that can't easily be reconciled with disinterest or a desire to be cool. Keep in mind that unsafe behavior puts yourself at risk but also your horse and others around you. Relying on luck to avoid injury is not a sustainable strategy. But you can throw out those brown M&Ms one by one.

* Study analyzing causes for horse accidents: Fernanda Camargo, William R. Gombeski Jr, Polly Barger, Connie Jehlik, Holly Wiemers, James Mead & Amy Lawyer, | (2018) Horse-related injuries: Causes, preventability, and where educational efforts should be focused, Cogent Food & Agriculture, 4:1, 1432168. Link: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311932.2018.1432168> 

GONE AWAY

Ronald Malone



When Ron Malone returned home at night to Petaluma after high-profile lawyering in San Francisco, he would run into the house, change from his suit to his jeans, and race to the barn where he would walk up and down the aisle listening to the horses eat, loving how the sounds and smells brought his blood pressure right down.

Ron died March 11, 2020, from complications caused by amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) or Lou Gehrig's disease at age 73.

A retired lawyer, the Mountain View native earned a bachelor's degree from San Jose State University, juris doctorate from Santa Clara University, and a master of law from Harvard University. As a Justice Department prosecutor, he traveled the country and led an investigation of the CIA. He returned to the Bay Area in 1977 and entered private practice in which he focused on defense work for the remainder of his career. After retiring, he was president of the Mabie Foundation, a charitable trust that made numerous grants in Sonoma County.

Sonoma County remembers Ron for his service as the Sonoma County Horse Council president for four years, board member of Giant Steps Therapeutic Equestrian Center and the Petaluma People Services Center, but mostly for the development of Circle Oak Ranch, a state-of-the-art equine veterinary and rehabilitation center. He had purchased the 33-acre property in 1991. After working toward developing it, much by his own hand, he joined forces with a group of veterinarians to build Circle Oak Equine, today succeeded by Petaluma Equine.

Though Ron was an avid cutting horse competitor, more notable was "his unbelievable love for the animals," described wife Sara Malone, his partner for 23 years. "He was able to ride after he could no longer walk. The horses kept him going. The connection and the amount of joy they brought him is his story. He loved the whole experience."

Ron and his horse Rubys CD, known as Ruben, won the 2014 Amateur Superstakes Championship for cutting horses in Fort Worth, Texas, the dream of a lifetime. For that championship, Ron had his feet tied to the stirrups with rubber bands because he could not feel his feet, a symptom of the disease. When he called to tell Sara he won, Sara asked him how he was doing, and he said, "Well, it's hard to be depressed when you're the world champion."

His attitude that all would be fine was part of why people responded to him, according to Sara who would sometimes be too nervous to watch him compete. However, she did not worry when the last year or so he needed to be lifted into the saddle to ride. "He was the most graceful rider I've ever seen. For such a big guy on those little Quarter Horses, his whole body was at one with the horse."

Ron was survived by his wife Sara, daughters Molly Malone of Belvedere, California, and Kate Malone of Wellington, Florida, and grandsons Louis and Hunter.

TRIVIA

By Jennifer Forsberg Meyer © Horse&Rider For more trivia questions, visit HorseandRider.com

QUESTION: Approximately how many different horse breeds are there in existence around the world today?

- A) About 100
- B) About 400
- C) About 850

ANSWER: B is correct. Although there's only one species of domestic horse, within that species there are about 400 different breeds around the world.

Since the time of the horse's domestication, breeding for specialized purposes—such as warfare, farm work, harness and drayage, hunting, racing, ranch work, etc—has resulted in a wide range of body types and temperaments within the hundreds of different breeds.

Differentiation within breeds is also apparent, as in the variances between, say, a Quarter Horse bred for cattle work and one destined for hunter under saddle competition.



Photo: William Stacey

QUESTION: What breed of horse has been largely unchanged for 900 years, lives outside in 40-below temperatures, and provides milk for human consumption?

ANSWER: The Mongolian horse. This hardy breed is essentially the same as it was when ridden by Genghis Khan's conquering warriors in the 11th century. Though Mongolian horses range in size from 12 to 14 hands, their head size and bone structure classify them as horses, not ponies.

In their native country, they live outside year-round, even at temperatures as low as 40 below. Used for racing, herding, and transport, Mongolian horses are also slaughtered for food. Milk from the mares is fermented into Mongolia's national drink, known as *airag*.

QUESTION: In what part of the world was the horse first domesticated, and by whom?

- A) In what is now Alaska, by Aleut tribes
- B) On the Ukrainian steppes, by Aryan tribes
- C) In sub-Saharan Africa, by African tribes

ANSWER: B is correct. One of the first peoples to domesticate horses were nomadic Aryan tribes living on the Ukrainian steppes bordering the Caspian and Black Seas, northeast of the Mediterranean. These nomads already knew how to herd animals—probably sheep, goats, cattle, and reindeer.

Horse-domesticating may also have been occurring at roughly the same time in other parts of the world, notably China and Mesopotamia (modern Iraq).

As an animal herded for meat and milk (riding would come later), horses would have offered at least one advantage over other species: easier feeding.

This is because horses, unlike other herd animals, will paw through snow to find forage in the wintertime.

To keep things manageable, early horse herders may have kept mares only, tying them out when they were in season to be covered by wild stallions. Colts born into the herd may have been eaten; fillies grew up to join the mare band. Ukrainian Steppe Nature Reserve



Ukrainian Steppe Nature Reserve

Photo Balkhovitin



Photo: Pixabay

QUESTION: What color pattern is this mostly white Paint Horse?

ANSWER: It's a "medicine hat," a pattern in which the horse is almost entirely white except for color over his ears and perhaps around his eyes, on the chest, and at the tail base. Prized by Native American tribes of the Great Plains, the medicine hat coloration was thought by some to indicate a horse with supernatural powers. The color over the poll was considered a "war bonnet," and any color on the chest and flanks was thought of as "shields."

QUESTION: Is it true or false: On his famous ride warning that the British were coming, Paul Revere rode a sturdy little mare by the name of Scheherazade.

ANSWER: False. Paul Revere didn't own a horse. The one he rode on his famous ride was lent to him by the family of John Larkin (deacon of the Old North Church in Charlestown, Massachusetts) and its name and breed have never been established.

But the Scheherazade story is an absolutely lovely work of fiction enjoyed by many a horse-loving child of the boomer generation. Titled "Mr. Revere and I: Being an Account of Certain Episodes in the Career of Paul Revere, Esq., as Revealed by His Horse", it's a wonderful book to read aloud to your child.



Photo: Pixabay

QUESTION: What's the fastest a horse of any breed has been documented to run?

- A) 27 mph
- B) 44 mph
- C) 55 mph

ANSWER: C is correct. The top speed at which the world's fastest equine sprinter, the Quarter Horse, has been clocked is 55 mph. The fastest recorded race time for a Thoroughbred is 44 mph. The average equine gallop clocks in at about 27 mph.



Photo: Pixabay



Photo: Stacey Dial, Pixabay

QUESTION: What do these words mean?

Dapple

- A) an apple-flavored horse treat
- B) soft 'spots' in a haircoat
- C) horsey pimples

ANSWER: B is correct. Dapples are spots on a horse's haircoat in which the coloring is slightly lighter than the surrounding hair. Dapples may be subtle or obvious. Most common in gray horses, dappling also appears with horses of other colors, especially in spring or fall, when new hair growth occurs. Good health enables dappling to occur in horses genetically predisposed to them.

Bang

- A) slam the tail accidentally in a trailer door.
- B) shoot the tail with a full-force stream of water.
- C) trim the bottom of the tail parallel to the ground.

ANSWER: C is correct. A banged tail has been cut straight across at the bottom, so that it's parallel to the ground. This

creates a tidy, professional look, and it helps a thin tail appear thicker at the bottom.



Photo: Patti Schofler

Root

- A) sliding into the ground
- B) pulling on the bit
- C) cheering you on

ANSWER: B is correct. A horse that roots is diving his head down to pull the reins out of your hands. Simply pulling back on the reins isn't a good fix; it just sets up the battle. Instead—once you know it's not a problem with the bit itself—drive the horse energetically forward each time he attempts this, which both brings his head up and makes him work harder. Over time, this makes rooting seem less desirable to him.



QUESTION: Can you match this definition? It's an unshapely horse neck, can be 'sheepish,' too. It's a:

- A) gnu
- B) ewe
- C) slew

ANSWER: B is correct. A ewe neck is overdeveloped on its underside and underdeveloped along the crest, with a dip in front of the withers. Called an upside-down neck because of its appearance, it's a conformational fault that can be exacerbated by poor riding that puts the horse's head in the air.

QUESTION: If you slap with it hard, you may land in the dirt. It's a:

- A) quirt
- B) squirt
- C) flirt

ANSWER: A is correct. From the Mexican Spanish *cuarta*, or whip, a quirt is a short whip with a braided leather lash.



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

QUESTION: The "hobby" in hobby horse came from the name of...

- A) a 15th century toy shop
- B) a type of gentle Irish horse
- C) the toy's inventor

ANSWER: B is correct. The "hobby" in hobby horse comes from a type of smooth-gaited Irish horse popular in England in the 1400s. These gentle mounts were known as "hobbies," and the term became associated with the smooth-rocking children's toy.



LISTEN, LEARN, LAUGH AND ENJOY

Podcasts About Horses and Equestrians
Come in So Many Forms

By Patti Schofler

A typical studio setup for podcasting

Photo: Joe007 / Pixabay

Podcasts are the dream come true for so many reasons. Essentially on demand radio shows that via the Internet can be downloaded or streamed any time to a computer, smartphone, or portable media device. Importantly they are the ideal entertainment for when cleaning stalls, hiking, gardening, doing the dishes or taking a break between horses. All that time you could be listening to an amazing interview with your favorite horse expert.

While in most cases you can download directly from a podcast's website, several apps allow you to sort through episodes and download. Sometimes dubbed "podcatchers," these apps are generally free or cheap. Typically podcasts allow you to subscribe and get new episodes delivered automatically.

Some apps are these: Apple Podcast, Anchor, Castbox, Dogcatcher, Google Podcasts, Pocket Casts, Podbean, Podcast Addict, Podcast Go, Spotify, TuneIn Radio, YouTube, Stitcher, iTunes, Soundcloud and the Podcast App.

Keep in mind that there are a zillion podcasts on the Internet and many are horse podcasts. Two main networks have organized their podcasts under one umbrella: Active Interest Media Equine Podcast Network and Horse Radio Network. Others are individual.

If you want us to recognize a podcast that we missed, let us know.

ACTIVE INTEREST MEDIA EQUINE PODCAST NETWORK

- **BARN STORIES** podcast features EQUUS magazine's most popular content. Hosted by EQUUS editor Laurie Prinz and managing editor Christine Barakat, the bi-weekly Barn Stories podcast features a professional voice actor reading True Tales, Back Pages and essays published in EQUUS over the years. Each episode begins with a brief discussion of the article to be featured, followed by a reading of the story.

- **DISEASE DU JOUR** podcast is designed for equine veterinarians, vet students, vet techs and horse industry professionals by Equi-Management. The Equine Health Network's publisher Kimberly S. Brown hosts the bi-monthly show with interviews and discussions on timely equine health and research topics with top equine veterinarians and investigators.

- **DRESSAGE TODAY** podcast focuses on inspiration and education for riders of all dressage levels similar to the magazine and online video options over the years. Since the show's inception, co-host and content director Jennifer Mellace and co-host Lindsay Paulsen have featured guests ranging from Olympians to dedicated adult amateurs to training, feeding, tack and equipment experts.

- **THE RIDE** is Horse & Rider magazine's bi-weekly, Western horse life podcast with assistant editor of the magazine Michaela Jaycox and managing editor Nichole Chirico incorporating current events, interviews with top horsemen and women, and engaging conversations about Jaycox's and Chirico's personal horse lives.

- **PRACTICAL HORSEMAN** podcast is kicking off its second year with new episodes featuring respected sport horse guests who share their horse-world experiences with training, riding, and horse care. The podcast is co-hosted by Practical Horseman editors Sandra Oliynyk and Jocelyn Pierce and runs every other Friday.

- **THE SCORE** and **THE SHORT SCORE** podcasts produced by Team Roping Journal every other Thursday feature interviews with noted experts in the sport of team roping, both from the competition side and from the organizing side. For the third season, Journal editor and The Score host Chelsea Shaffer takes a deep dive into the interviews. Every Tuesday The Short Score podcast provides quick news and roping association schedules and updates.

- **ASK THE HORSE LIVE** each month presents a new episode, that features prominent equine veterinarians and industry experts. The 60-minute live podcast covers a timely and important equine health topic, drawing a targeted audience of hands-on equine caretakers and owners. The podcasts are then archived on www.TheHorse.com for one year. Also on the site the top four questions from the live event on TheHorse.com are posted as short clips.

HORSE RADIO NETWORK PODCASTS

- **STABLE SCOOP** is home to the "Rest of the Scoop," a short, professionally written story about a horse or horse person from history told in the "Rest of the Story" style.

- **HORSES IN THE MORNING** is a live morning show with an equine theme. It's a light, lively, entertaining daily look at the horse world and the people in it. The show includes entertaining conversation, out of the ordinary guests, numerous regular horse related segments, listener call in, contests, and giveaways.

- **EQUESTRIAN LEGENDS** celebrates the lives of men and women from different disciplines who have shaped the horse world in their chosen fields and, by popular acclaim, have become legends in their lifetimes.

- **HORSE TIP DAILY** is a short podcast packed with useful tips and information from the top names in the horse world covering all aspects of horsemanship.

- **HEELS DOWN HAPPY HOUR** presents happenings in the horse world. Who's winning what? What weird rules are you probably going to violate at your next horse show? What does your favorite rider really think about white breeches? Welcome to Happy Hour.

- **WISDOM BY WESA**, or the Western & English Sales Association, the world's largest equestrian trade organization for retailers, manufacturers, and sales exclusive interviews, provides interviews with noteworthy western/English personalities, retailers, and exhibitors for manufacturers and retailers of the equine industry.

- **DRESSAGE RADIO SHOW** is the longest running podcast about the elegant world of dressage and the official podcast of the United States Dressage Federation. Hosted by two Grand Prix riders, the Dressage Radio Show is a training-based show laced with interviews, book reviews and news from the world of dressage.

- **EVENTING RADIO SHOW** is all about the thrilling equine sport of eventing and is owned by the Professional Riders Organization. The weekly online radio show brings listeners news and interviews about one of the toughest equine disciplines.

- **DRIVING RADIO SHOW** is dedicated to the thrill of carriage driving. Dr. Wendy Ying and Glenn Hebert take an entertaining look at



it all from competitive driving to the pastime of recreational driving.

- **PLAID CAST AND PLAIDCAST JR** are weekly podcasts hosted by Piper Klemm, PhD, publisher of The Plaid Horse magazine, and by USEF "R" judge, rider, and trainer, and Plaid Horse editor Sissy Wickes. Guests include Olympian equestrians, top hunter/jumper and equitation riders, trainers, horse show managers and industry insiders, covering topics that include horsemanship, collegiate equestrian, the state of our sport and horse show how to's for riders at every level. One episode each month is devoted to the mental side of riding with mental skills coach and author Tonya Johnston.

- **HORSE NUTRITION** podcast with Purina Animal Nutrition's team of PhD equine nutritionists and special guests is hosted by author and trainer Lisa Wysocky. From therapy horses, to pack horses, to Budweiser Clydesdales and trail horses, the podcast is filled with stories of extraordinary horses doing amazing jobs, along with advice and information on how to best feed our equine companions.

- **RETIRED RACEHORSE RADIO** is a guide to the adoption, care and training of the retired racehorse. While the show will focus on retired Thoroughbreds, it also covers other racehorse breeds like Standardbreds and Arabians. The show is presented in cooperation with the Retired Racehorse Project and New Vocations Racehorse Adoption Program.

- **HORSEMANSHIP RADIO** is dedicated to the exploration of good horsemanship throughout the world. Hosted by Debbie Roberts Loucks (Monty Roberts' daughter) the show includes segments, tips and interviews while exploring good horsemanship.

- **EQUINE CLICKER 101** teaches the fundamentals of positive reinforcement training (clicker training) in this unique hands-on podcast. The leader in On Target Training, Shawna Karrasch, takes listeners step by step through exercises so that they can practice with their horse while listening to the podcast.

- **THE STACY WESTFALL PODCAST** is brought to the Internet by the famed reining trainer and competitor Stacy Westfall. In her podcast, she shares her knowledge about horses, and offers insights into issues, challenges and goals riders encounter with horses.


INDEPENDENT PODCASTS

- **THE CONFIDENT RIDER WITH JANE PIKE** podcast is hosted by Jane Pike, a certified equestrian mental skills and mindset coach, a certified master of hypnotherapy, and an equine assisted learning facilitator. She is the mind coach on the Ask The Experts Panel for NZ Horse & Pony magazine and a monthly columnist for NRHA Reiner magazine. Jane features her work with competitive and recreational horse riders, inspiring them to new levels of confidence, connection, and performance.

- **CHRONICLE OF THE HORSE** has a monthly podcast hosted by Mollie Bailey, senior reporter at Chronicle of the Horse magazine, a leading U.S. sport horse magazine since 1937. The podcast features a variety of guests sharing news from around the horse world.

- **STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSES MOUTH RADIO SHOW** features conversations with equine artists, authors, inventors, entrepreneurs, therapists, and veterinarians in search of innovative approaches to horses. The show is hosted by retired art teacher Paula Slater. As a horse owner for over 30 years, Paula focuses the creative side of the horse world.

- **YOUNG BLACK EQUESTRIANS** discusses the ins and outs of equine culture with an extra dose of melanin. Three seasons on Horse Network opens up the conversation to educate and promote the lifestyle we all love.



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SOCIAL MEDIA ITS EFFECT ON OUR YOUNG RIDERS

By Melissa Kalember

Every day I scroll through social media to see what my friends are up to, what my colleagues are doing, what educational videos I can watch, and what items for sale I can unearth. How wonderful it is that I can go to one place to stay connected with my friends. Then there are the days when I get so tired of the “look at me” pictures, and the “I am doing so well” pictures and the “look what I have” photos. It’s then that I’m tuned into the effect these types of pictures have on our youth.

As a trainer and instructor, I have a student base right now that is mostly young girls and teenagers. My oldest daughter is ten. I see, hear and talk at length with them about the reality of life with horses. What my students see on social media is their ‘friends’ postings about their winnings and the perfect parts of their lessons. In most of the postings it matters to them that they look good and appear accomplished because if they don’t, they will be seen as less than perfect.

Unfortunately, humans love to compare, judge, and criticize and social media can be used as a platform for that. I too have struggled with this, but from a professional perspective. I wanted to post only “the perfect” picture so I can look good and get more clients. But then I realized if I choose to do that, I am not practicing what I teach.

I talk constantly with my students about the reality of the process of life with horses: the ups, the downs, the two steps forward, one step back. We talk about the posts they see on social media and what’s real about them. So I choose to switch gears with my social media posts. I’m now posting my feelings, thoughts, and my students at work, not just the finished product or picture perfect. If people are going to judge, then that is their prerogative.

What is so funny and interesting is that the posts that are real and show our vulnerability are the ones that get the most action. Why is that? Is it because many want to post pictures that show who they really are, but they don’t have the courage to do so? Then when others take the brave step, they secretly are saying “whoohooo.”

I am on the board for the NorCal Hunter Jumper Association, and we recently started a social media campaign entitled “It’s Not All Victory Gallops.” We wanted to show the youth of our sport that even the top-level riders make mistakes and have bad days. Slowly more and more are posting the pictures of real riding and real life with horses. For example, a top NorCal Hunter Jumper trainer shared a video of her getting thrown in front of the saddle during a jump off with jumps four feet high. She had to halt the horse because she was literally sitting in front of the saddle and had no



Would this scene make it into social media?

Image: James DeMers, Pixabay

choice but to swing back into the saddle.

It is hard. It is a process. It is a journey. It is one of the most rewarding experiences. It can be amazing and life changing. I have worked hard to get where I am. I love to judge horse shows. I love to teach riders. I love to train horses. I love to do bodywork on our equine athletes. I love teaching clinics. I love being on all the committees I am on. I will admit some days I get discouraged by all the comparing, trying to be better than and look at me outlook. Then I remember what is real and I forge ahead doing my best to stay true to myself and my clients. 🐾

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Your Disaster Plan: One Is Never Enough

By Julie Atwood

This time of the year we're usually getting ready for shows, trail rides, horse camping, and, unfortunately, fire season. The 2020 summer calendar, however, looks very different. COVID has reduced travel and gatherings and dramatically emphasized the importance of biosafety not only for humans, but for our animals as well.

Equine infectious diseases are on the rise, and we have become increasingly aware of how infections spread quickly during disasters. Biosafety has long been an important component of animal disaster response training. Stringent hygiene protocols for all workers and animal owners in emergency animal shelters and in the field are required, and this year will ramp up significantly during incident response to fire, earthquake, or wind events leading to power shut downs.

Equine and livestock owners, trainers, and facility managers and staff will need to evaluate thoroughly and assess frequently the risks of evacuating versus sheltering in place (SIP). What made sense last year may need rethinking now. Planning for both evacuation and SIP scenarios is essential.

Evacuation of large animals may not be the safest option in every situation and is often not possible. For that reason, having a shelter-in-place plan is the one you will have to deploy. Actually, the best plan is one that keeps you and your animals out of shelters, which can be stressful and crowded. If you can create space at home that can be safe in fire, flood, or storm, can maintain a safe water supply, and permits you to leave feed and medications where responders can access them, your equines may be safest and stay healthier living in the surroundings they're accustomed to.

BE READY FOR LITTLE WARNING

Furthermore, you and your animals may be forced to shelter in place because of an event occurring with no advance warning, something as small as a road closure due to a fallen tree or flooded bridge or as massive as an earthquake. Extended power outages (planned or unexpected) are also critical parts of the equation and require advance planning.

COVID has emphasized the need to have resources lined up to care for your animals in your absence, but this should always be a priority item. And, as with every component of your disaster plan, identifying helpers should include having several options.

Evacuation becomes a safer option if you have pre-arranged, safe boarding or pasture locations and adequate transport resources. If your Plan A is to evacuate, do it early. Your destination and your transportation should be confirmed and ready, your animals prepped and supplies loaded. Go as soon as the first local alert is posted.

If an emergency shelter is your only option, make sure your documents and paperwork are complete and any necessary reservation is confirmed. Have several days' supply of feed. Understand the shelter rules for animal care. Remember that your animals are looking to their handlers for calm leadership, and that reducing stress will result in healthier outcomes.

RULE OF MULTIPLES

The cardinal rule of planning for disastrous disruptions is to



CAR AND TRUCK READY-KITS

- ✓ Water (packs, jugs, Camelback)
- ✓ Purifier straw & tablets
- ✓ Buckets, hose, nozzle
- ✓ Tarps, foil blankets, ponchos
- ✓ Boots and socks
- ✓ Multi-season clothes
- ✓ Underwear
- ✓ Nitrile gloves
- ✓ Work gloves
- ✓ Potty bucket & liners
- ✓ Disinfectant & Chlorine Bleach
- ✓ Antibacterial soap, wipes, TP
- ✓ N-95 Masks & safety eye wear
- ✓ Food kit
- ✓ NOAA Radio
- ✓ Satellite phone/Beacon locator
- ✓ Buckets, spray bottles, sponge
- ✓ Vehicle Safety Checklist
- ✓ Loaded gross weight verification
- ✓ Fire Extinguisher
- ✓ Chargers (several kinds)
- ✓ First-aid kit
- ✓ Generator and fuel
- ✓ Chain & hand saws
- ✓ Bolt & wire cutters
- ✓ Reflective Duct Tape
- ✓ Safety Cones
- ✓ Wheel chocks, jack, crowbar
- ✓ Jumper cables
- ✓ Whistles & flares
- ✓ Headlamps, lanterns
- ✓ Safety vests
- ✓ Flashlights & batteries
- ✓ Solar charger
- ✓ Small toolkit, knife, scissors

have more than one of everything. That rule applies to the following:

- Ways to receive alerts and to communicate
 - Emergency contacts to care for and/or transport your animals
 - Evacuation routes and destinations
 - Go bags, tool kits, supply crates
 - Safe refuge places for yourself, family, and animals at home or nearby
 - Disaster Action Plan (DAP) binders, or grab and go files, one to keep with you and one to give to an emergency contact
- For equines, the rule of multiples applies as well:**
- School your equines to load into several types of trailers calmly and quickly for anyone
 - Use more than one means of identification, even if the equine is microchipped
 - Have several sets of halters and lead ropes (at pen or paddock in barn, in trailer or truck)

In a disaster, COVID will undoubtedly influence our decisions about evacuating ourselves and vulnerable family members. More residents may opt to shelter at home, providing their home can be made as safe as possible. This applies to our equines and livestock, too. If you can create safe refuges surrounded by clear, secure, defensible space, with secure water resources, your equines and livestock can escape the risks of stressful transport and crowded shelters.

Long-term survival and health are the objectives of every good disaster plan. Riding out a lengthy power outage, being without assistance for days or weeks, and having clear directives for the care of your animals according to your instructions are all key elements.

But hey, it is summer, and that means rides, camping, (socially distanced, most likely), and road trips. It does not mean being casual about travel safety. Treat every trip like it's an evacuation.



Check your vehicles, toss in your go bags. If you're a camper, your gear can also be your evacuation or SIP kit.


STAY TUNED TO WHAT'S HAPPENING

The "Know Before You Go" rule includes signing up to receive alerts for wherever you're headed, having local veterinary contacts, and being familiar with multiple routes in and out of the area. Your barn or pet-sitters need to be as ready and knowledgeable as you are. If they're from out of town, make sure they're clear about evacuation routes and have signed up for all your local alerts.

To help you update your plans and improve your outlook, the HALTER Project website (www.halterproject.org) has resources that include the following:

- Disaster Action Plan Binder templates
- HALTERproject.org/make-a-plan
- Extended power outage planning poster
- Go-Kit checklists for people and animals
- Family & Commuter Emergency Communication Worksheets (FEMA)
- Animal advance medical directive
- Stable and trailer biosafety checklist (California Department of Food and Agriculture)
- Truck and trailer safety checklist (North Valley Animal Disaster Group and US Rider)

The HALTER Project website offers comprehensive information and resources for nearly every disaster preparation need, including a COVID 19 resources page with links to agencies, teaching institutions, and trusted organizations providing information relevant to animal owners.

Last, but certainly not least, be self-reliant, but again, the "Rule of Multiples" really kicks in here. COVID has reinforced the value of connection. Our neighbors, friends, and colleagues, no matter how near or far, can be our lifeline. And we to theirs. Reconnect, reach out, update your contacts. And have a safe, healthy, and happy summer. 



EQUINE READY-KIT

- ✓ **First-aid kit with EVERYTHING**
- ✓ **Hoof care tools**
- ✓ **Climbing rope**
- ✓ **Extra halters & lead ropes**
- ✓ **Long butt-rope**
- ✓ **Fly spray & stick**
- ✓ **Leg wraps**
- ✓ **Fly masks**
- ✓ **Liniment**
- ✓ **Treats**
- ✓ **Towels, assorted buckets**
- ✓ **Slow-feed hay nets**
- ✓ **Feed & water in trailer & arena**
- ✓ **1 gal. metal can w/handle**
- ✓ **EZ boots**
- ✓ **Vicks in a tube**
- ✓ **1 mane-tail comb**
- ✓ **1 coat brush**
- ✓ **Fly sheets in a vacuum bag**
- ✓ **Hose, nozzle**

"Animals were once, for all of us, teachers. They instructed us in ways of being and perceiving that extended our imaginations, that were models for additional possibilities." - Joan McIntyre

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LOOKING TO VOLUNTEER?

There are a variety of ways to help during disasters. Most volunteer animal responder positions require prior training and registration. The HALTER Project website provides information about training resources, and links to the FEMA Emergency Management Institute site. In the North Bay, several Community Animal Response Teams (CARTs) work with county emergency managers to provide volunteer assistance when and where needed.


Many regional CARTs (Including Sonoma, Napa, Contra Costa and Solano) require standardized basic training certification that you can fulfill through free, online independent study courses offered by FEMA. In most situations, volunteers must already be registered, and have some basic certifications, so it's important to become informed of the protocols for the group you'd like to join.

HALTER is an acronym for Horse and Livestock Team Emergency Response.


For more information on volunteer training, contact:

- Napa CART www.napacart.org
- Sonoma CART www.sonomacart.org
- Solano CART www.solanocart.org





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Keepin' It COOL

10 Ways to Help Your Horse Stay Healthy This Summer

By Amy Young

Northern California summers are known for record-breaking heatwaves. Summer also happens to be packed with competitions and many of our favorite equine events. The good news is that being mindful and planning ahead can ease the adjustment to warmer weather. Keep these ten tips in mind to help your horses stay happy, healthy, and performing their best this summer.

1. Know the signs of fatigue and overheating. These signs include the following:

- A high respiratory rate (>40 breaths per minute) that does not come down with 10 to 30 minutes of rest, changes in mental activity or decreased energy levels.
- Mucous membranes in the mouth become dry and lose their usual "slimy" feel.
- You may also notice a prolonged capillary refill time, indicating dehydration. To test, push on your horse's gums. They should start out pink, then blanch to white after pressure, and return to pink in one to two seconds.
- Use a stethoscope, or put your ear on your horse's flank, behind the ribs, to listen for gut sounds. Gurgling sounds are normal and good. No gut sounds are a warning that your horse may be uncomfortable.

2. Keep your horse hydrated. Maintain hydration by allowing free access to water at all times. It is a myth that if a hot horse drinks water it will experience colic or other medical problems. If you think your horse is not drinking enough water, offer some hay to encourage drinking after eating. Feeding soupy bran or pellet mashes is another means of getting extra water into your horse.

3. Keep a supply of water available for your horse to drink. Obtain some clean five-gallon cans and fill them with water before you travel. A 1,000-pound horse not in work, not lactating and not in high heat and humidity needs a minimum of six gallons per day. This doubles or triples in high heat and humidity, requiring no less than 12 to 18 gallons per day.

4. Provide salt and electrolytes as needed. These may be useful if your horse has been sweating excessively. However, horses must consume water to gain the maximum benefit from supplemented electrolytes and avoid dehydration. Ensure that your horse has access to plain, fresh water to encourage appropriate water intake. If you have not used electrolytes before, outline a



Almost as nice as a day at the beach.

Photo: Pixabay

plan with your veterinarian and be sure to use only electrolytes specifically made for horses.

5. Limit exertion during peak heat. Ride in the early mornings or evenings when it is cooler and keep your rides short. Remember to go slow and provide frequent breaks, in the shade whenever possible.

6. Optimize ventilation in the trailer. Open vents and windows in the trailer, but for safety reasons don't let your horse stick its head out while on the road.

7. Plan ahead for trailering. Trailer in the early morning or late evening hours when it is cooler. Never leave horses in a parked trailer in hot weather, especially if there is no shade. Temperatures inside a trailer can rapidly reach 140 degrees and horses can quickly develop heat stroke. Provide as much ventilation and airflow as safely possible on the road. Be very careful when hauling foals, as they are more susceptible to overheating than adult horses.

8. Provide shade. Provide your horse with as much shade as possible. Trees, run-in sheds, and other structures with good ventilation can give your horse relief from the sun.

9. Ensure good air circulation in barns. Open windows and doors in barns to provide cross-ventilation. Try to arrange for more air circulation by careful placement of fans in front of the stalls or in the aisle ways. Be sure to keep electric cords out of reach of horses. Exercise caution with any electrical appliances in a barn as faulty wiring or inadequate circuits can cause a fire.

10. To lower body temperature, hose off your horse or pour a bucket of water over your horse. Evaporation produces cooling and continuous hosing is one of the most effective means of lowering body temperature. Use water that is cool or lukewarm, but never hot.

Contact your veterinarian immediately if you think that your horse is experiencing heat-related issues, such as dehydration, exhaustion or heat stroke, as these can lead to serious illness.



IS THERE A TUBBY IN YOUR BARN?

**OBESITY,
ONE WAY YOU DON'T
WANT YOUR HORSE
TO SCORE BIG**

As horse owners we have been known to equate food giving with an expression of love for our animals. Yet truth be told, overfeeding is a welfare concern with unhealthy obesity at its result.

Obesity is epidemic in the U.S. human population and is increasingly becoming an issue for our companion animals, even though it has many causes. Breeds we consider easy keepers, including ponies, Andalusians, and Morgan horses, may have become this way because they

developed in rocky areas or places with sparse vegetation. The ability to survive on meager, low energy grasses gave them an evolutionary advantage. On the other hand, many of our hays and pasture grasses were developed to support the nutrient needs of cattle for both weight gain and milk production. These food sources can be particularly problematic for horses, who often have low energy requirements based on their level of work.

Obesity can lead to many problems for the horse. Excess weight can lead to joint pain which is detrimental to performance. Obesity also can affect reproduction. Excess fat deposition around the testicles can reduce the ability the testes to regulate temperature, which can have a negative effect on fertility. Mares who are overweight may have longer heat cycles and a more difficult time foaling.

Beware of Laminitis

Perhaps the most known result from obesity is laminitis, a painful disease that affects the horse's feet and occurs in response to insulin resistance. The relationship between insulin resistance and obesity is complex. Not every obese horse is insulin resistant and not every insulin resistant horse is obese. Insulin resistance means that a horse secretes abnormally high levels of insulin after eating due to the cell's decreased ability to use insulin to transport glucose (sugar). This impairs the horse's ability to get glucose into the cell for energy and can lead to increased fat storage and can lead to laminitis. Commonly known as founder, laminitis occurs when the laminae, the tissues that hold the coffin bone in the hoof to the hoof wall, become inflamed. This limits blood flow to the hoof. In severe cases, the coffin bone rotates and can come through the sole of the hoof. Obesity compounds and worsens laminitic conditions due to the extra weight on the inflamed laminae.

Knowing how to identify overweight or obese horses is important to their health, and it is not ideal simply to eyeball the horse, especially a horse you see daily. Weight tapes can help you estimate how many pounds of feed your horse should eat



Does this halter make me look fat?

By Amy Housman

in a day, but they are not useful in determining the ideal weight for your horse. They can be useful in tracking weight loss.

Body condition scoring is the easiest way to assess obesity and is helpful in tracking weight changes in your horse. Veterinarians, researchers, and horse owners have come to use the Henneke body condition scoring system, developed in 1983, to assess fat accumulation in six areas of the body

both visually and by palpation. The score runs from one to nine. Low scores indicate thin animals while scores of seven through nine indicate an animal is overweight.

A 2018 study in Virginia estimated that 51 percent of horses have a body condition score of over six and 19 percent have a body condition score of seven or above indicating the horses are obese. Studies in the UK have mirrored these results revealing that 35 percent of horses in the United Kingdom have body condition scores of seven or above.

Check Fat Deposits in Six Areas

The body condition scoring system looks at areas of fat deposition on six areas of the horse: neck, shoulder, ribs, withers, loin, and tailhead. The ideal body condition for a horse varies based on its use, but the average pleasure horse should have a body condition score of five. This means that the ribs cannot be seen but can easily be felt. The horse's back should be level without a crease. The neck blends into the body without noticeable fat deposition along the crest. A score above seven indicates that a horse is overweight. A score of eight or nine indicates obesity.

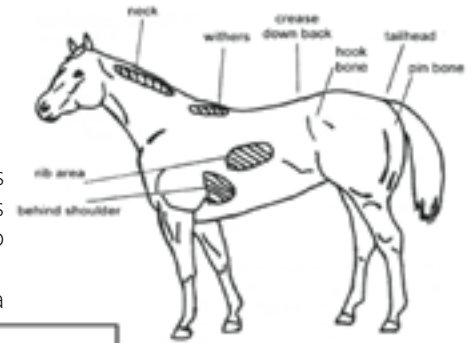
Until you get used to body condition scoring, it's useful to refer to the body condition score chart accompanying this article. As you look at each part of the horse, you can put a check in the row that you think best represents how the horse looks. Then you can average the scores. Body condition scoring can be done relatively quickly and can easily be done once or twice a month in order to determine changes in weight.

To reduce a horse's weight and horse's insulin sensitivity, exercise is key, as is looking at what the horse is eating. Horses should ideally be fed two percent of their body weight. Many horses who are not in regular work do not need the excess calories provided by alfalfa hays and grains.

As an expression of that love for the horse, working with your veterinarian or an equine nutritionist may help you to better understand the energy requirements of your horse to return it to its ideal weight and health. 🐾

THE MAN BEHIND THE EQUINE BODY SCORING SYSTEM

DR. DON HENNEKE



The renowned Henneke horse body condition scoring system was developed in the early 1980s by Dr. Don Henneke at Texas A&M University with the goal of creating a universal scale to assess horses' bodyweight and was first published in 1983. The system of a numerical scale used to evaluate by visual appraisal and palpation the amount of fat on a horse's body is used today by veterinarians, nutritionists, and law enforcement agencies as an objective method of scoring a horse's body condition in horse cruelty cases.

A native of Enid, Oklahoma, Henneke was born February 15, 1952, and went on to earn a bachelor of science degree in animal science from Oklahoma State University before obtaining a master's of animal science, focusing on equine reproductive physiology, from Louisiana State University. He later received his doctorate in animal science in 1981 from Texas A&M University.

Henneke's knowledge and expertise in the field of equine nutrition, reproduction and management was sought after by industry representatives and academicians throughout his career.

"Dr. Henneke was the driving force in the development of one of the premier equine management programs in the nation," said fellow professor Dr. David Snyder upon Henneke's death in 2012 of bone cancer at the age of 60.

Dr. Ben Bruce, head of the animal science and wildlife management department at Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas, said Henneke was highly regarded in the horse industry and treasured by his students.

Henneke also served as a consultant in the fields of equine management, reproduction and nutrition, enjoyed competing as a non-pro cutting horse rider, and served as adviser to the Tarleton Horseman's Association, supervisor of the Tarleton Stock Horse Team, and president of the Tarleton University Faculty Senate in 2009.

OVERALL HENNEKE BODY CONDITION SCORE:

modified from Henneke et al. EVJ 1983;15:371-372

Condition	Neck	Withers	Shoulder	Ribs	Back	Tailhead Area
1 Poor (extremely emaciated)	Bone structure easily noticeable	Bone structure easily noticeable	Bone structure easily noticeable	Ribs projecting prominently	Spinous processes projecting prominently	Tailhead, pinbones, and hook bones projecting prominently
No fatty tissue can be felt						
2 Very Thin (emaciated)	Bone structure faintly discernible	Bone structure faintly discernible	Bone structure faintly discernible	Ribs prominent	Slight fat covering over base of spinous processes. Transverse processes of lumbar vertebrae feel rounded. Spinous processes are prominent.	Tailhead prominent Pin bones prominent Hook bones prominent
3 Thin	Neck accentuated	Withers accentuated	Shoulder accentuated	Slight fat cover over ribs. Ribs easily discernible	Fat buildup halfway on spinous processes, but easily discernible. Transverse processes cannot be felt	Tailhead prominent but individual vertebrae cannot be visually identified. Hook bones appear rounded, but are still easily discernible. Pin bones not distinguishable
4 Moderately Thin	Neck not obviously thin	Withers not obviously thin	Shoulder not obviously thin	Faint outline of ribs discernible	Negative crease (peaked appearance) along back	Prominence depends on conformation. Fat can be felt. Hook bones not discernible
5 Moderate	Neck blends smoothly into body	Withers rounded over spinous processes	Shoulder blends smoothly into body	Ribs cannot be visually distinguished, but can be easily felt	Back is level	Fat around tailhead beginning to feel spongy
6 Moderately Fleishy	Fat beginning to be deposited	Fat beginning to be deposited	Fat beginning to be deposited behind shoulder	Fat over ribs feels spongy	May have a slight positive crease (a groove) down back	Fat around tailhead feels soft
7 Fleishy	Fat deposited along neck	Fat deposited along withers	Fat deposited behind shoulder	Individual ribs can be felt, but noticeable fat filling between ribs	May have a positive crease down the back	Fat around tailhead is soft
8 Fat	Noticeable thickening of neck	Area along withers filled with fat	Area behind shoulder filled with fat	Difficult to feel ribs	Positive crease down the back	Fat around tailhead very soft
9 Extremely Fat	Bulging fat	Bulging fat	Bulging fat	Patchy fat appearing over ribs	Obvious crease down the back Flank filled with fat	Bulging fat around tailhead

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Horses Have Their Own Coronavirus

By Michelle Beko, DVM

As I am writing this, we are all under a “shelter in place” order due to the novel coronavirus or COVID-19 wreaking havoc around the world. I thought that coronavirus infection in horses would be a worthy topic to discuss.

First, let’s visit some basics about the nature of the virus. Simply put, a virus is a piece of genetic material (DNA or RNA) surrounded by a capsule. We don’t consider it to be living because it is unable to reproduce on its own. It must invade an animal, plant, bacterium or other living cell and use that cell’s ability to reproduce. An infected animal’s immune system may kill viral infected cells if the viruses don’t directly kill those cells.

We don’t have much ammunition to fight against viruses, which are generally harder to kill with medications than other infectious agents since they rarely have unique enzymes or cellular processes that we can interfere with without making ourselves sick as well. Animals or people with viral infections (especially colds or viral pneumonia) may get secondary bacterial infections that may resolve with antibiotics, but the antibiotics are ineffective against the virus itself.

Many coronaviruses affect animals (see sidebar), usually causing respiratory or gastrointestinal problems. Most only affect one species of animal and its close relatives. Equine coronavirus (ECoV) was first discovered in foals in 1999 and thought not to be a cause of disease. Since then its incidence has increased significantly, and it is now considered an emerging disease of horses worldwide.

ECoV primarily infects the gastrointestinal tract of horses. Although a high percentage of horses on a given premises often become infected, many will remain asymptomatic. It is rarely fatal. Approximately 20 percent of horses will become sick from their infection. Of these, the most common symptoms are a fever



Winnie the Pooh character Eeyore dons a medical mask.

Photo courtesy of Svetlana

and poor appetite. Many will have low white blood cell counts. A smaller percentage will be colicky and/or have diarrhea.

The virus is primarily spread via the fecal-oral route. An infected horse’s manure infects another horse when the manure is in direct contact with feed or is spread by human hands or feet or contaminated things such as stall cleaning equipment. The incubation period (time from initial infection to symptoms) is two to three

days. How long the virus can persist in the environment is unknown, but it likely survives longer in the winter. Asymptomatic horses are likely to contribute to ECoV’s spread. Horses can shed the virus in their feces for 3 to 25 days and possibly longer. Cases can occur year-round, but a higher percentage arise in the winter.

Diagnosis is made by submitting a fecal sample for a polymerase chain reaction test (PCR) which detects viral RNA. Treatment for horses with coronavirus infection is general supportive care such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (Bute, Banamine, etc.) to lower fevers. Horses with diarrhea may need intravenous fluids.

Prevention is aided by good sanitation and isolation of sick horses. If a horse in the barn has a fever, that horse’s stall should be cleaned last and everyone should wash their hands after being in the stall or touching the horse. Although vaccines are often very effective in preventing viral infections, there is no vaccine available at this time.

Although ECoV does not infect humans, other diseases (*Salmonella*, *Clostridia perfringens*) can cause fevers. So, take precautions when handling any sick horse, especially by washing your hands. Stay healthy. 🐾



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NATURE AND NATURE BOTH TAKE CREDIT FOR QUARTER CRACKS

By Mary Taft-McPhee and Sam Durham



This deep quarter crack involves the coronary band. The "float" or cut out in the hoof will relieve pressure on the crack.

You arrived at the barn after a weekend away. As you pick up your horse's foot to clean his hoof, you notice this odd mark. Had he had an abscess and it exploded through the coronary band overnight? No, it's not really a hole. It's a crack, a vertical separation in the hoof wall, and it's fairly deep.

This is a quarter crack, found at the widest part of the foot. It occurs when the hoof is out of balance and stressed unevenly. Naturally, the hoof wall flexes to absorb concussion. When this expansion and contraction takes place on an imbalanced foot, the resulting forces cause the wall to crack and separate.

Rapid changes in moisture levels can exacerbate this by making the horn tubules that constitute the wall expand and contract themselves. Horses with long-toe underrun-heel foot conformation appear to be prone to quarter cracks because they tend to engage the toe more on the landing phase of their stride, which interferes with the ability of the heels and collateral cartilages to absorb impact.

A horse with thin walls on hooves that are relatively small in respect to his body size, that competes in three day eventing, and lives in a paddock where he goes from wet to dry footing on a regular basis is more likely to develop a quarter crack than a pony kept on pasture and ridden occasionally. When a crack develops, the horse is more likely to need aggressive treatment because many of the sources stressing his hooves will remain.

Danger To Sensitive Tissue

The crack that develops exposes the sensitive structures of the hoof and in a worst case scenario can trap bacteria and particles of dirt and sand, causing inflammation and injury. With the integrity of the wall compromised, the hoof is now more imbalanced and the crack will persist and will develop further if the horse continues to stress the wall. If the coronary band is involved either in the initial crack or as it migrates upward, your vet and farrier quickly must work together as damage to the sensitive tissue in that area can prevent the hoof from growing out properly.

Because the wall has lost its ability to support itself around the crack, shoeing may require a straight bar or heart bar shoe to help distribute the weight elsewhere around the hoof, including the heels and the frog. In order to ease pressure on the crack and prevent it from distorting further, your farrier may choose to "float" the affected area by leaving it out of contact with the shoe. They may also place clips on either side of the crack to help hold it together, or punch additional nail holes to avoid nailing too close to the crack. If the hoof is falling apart or sensitive tissue is exposed, they may patch the area with glue to protect and support it, or add a pad to the shoe for additional protection. In this case, make sure there is no bacteria and moisture trapped beneath as this will increase inflammation and slow healing.



A straight bar shoe with a cutout pad

Since the wall grows at a rate of one-quarter to one-half inch a month this is unfortunately a long term process, requiring regular attention from your farrier to keep the hoof in balance and maintain any support and patches. As the injury grows down the hoof and healthy horn appears, these supports may gradually be removed.

Prevention Is Possible

Being aware of the kinds of stresses that create quarter cracks can help prevent them. Keep on a regular farrier schedule, and watch for any changes that may indicate the hoof wall is being stressed. Cracks that run down the outside of the wall without reaching all the way through it, for instance, can be signs that the hoof is out of balance and needs to be addressed before a deeper crack forms. In some cases you might notice that the coronary band looks distorted from its usual continuous arc or that it is raised higher up in one area, which can be another indication of unequal stresses within the hoof capsule.

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