

EQUINE UPDATE

My Gut Feeling Is...

AUGUST 2008

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A horse's gastrointestinal (stomach and intestines) system can be sensitive and complicated. Owners who have experienced a colic episode know just how sensitive a horse's digestive system can be. The pain that horses feel during a colic episode may be strong enough to make them want to paw, lie down, roll, cramp up in the abdomen and groan.

Horses with a stomach (gastric) problem may experience any of these signs or have a sour attitude. This sour attitude could be anything from bucking, to being cinchy, or an unwillingness to work. A sore back, an inability to bend, a poor hair coat, or cribbing may also be seen.

The severity of signs that a horse might demonstrate during an episode of gastric disease may or may not correlate with the severity of the problem itself. Some horses are indeed more stoic than others.

The only way to accurately diagnose the cause of Equine Gastric Disease is via gastric endoscopy. Endoscopy

involves passing a camera from the nose into the stomach. The most common cause of Equine Gastric Disease is gastric ulcers (*EGUS—Equine Gastric Ulcer Syndrome*).

Omeprazole (*Gastrogard®* and *Ulcergard®*) is the treatment of choice for either gastritis or gastric ulcers. The length of treatment is longer for gastric ulcers vs. gastritis.

Stress is one of the factors that contributes to the development of EGUS. The elimination of stress factors such as showing, trailering, moving to a new barn and entering training, may impede future breakouts. If these can not be avoided, then Omeprazole, given at a lower dose prior to, during and after stressful events can be used as a preventative.

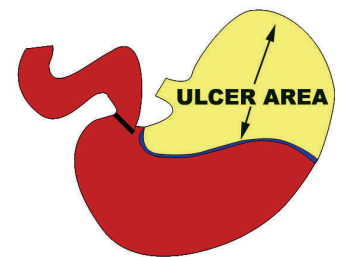
Physiologically, horses were meant to eat continually through out the day. Eating stimulates the release of saliva which contains mucous, for coating, and bicarbonate, a pH buffer for the stomach. As we feed our horses only twice a day that buffer system is suppressed and leaves the stomach at greater risk for inflammation and ulceration. Higher amounts of fat in the diet help

to prevent ulcers by stimulating the stomach to release prostaglandin E2, which protects the stomach.

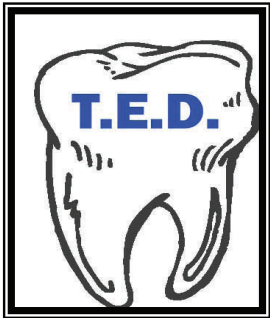
Phenylbutazone (bute), and other anti-inflammatories, can predispose or precipitate an episode of EGUS. If these medications are needed, then the use of either antacids, herbals, or Omeprazole (low dose) may need to be given at the same time to prevent EGUS.

We at ECVVH have a three meter videoscope capable of performing routine gastric endoscopy stall side. The videoscope allows you, the owner, to view the stomach right along us. Stall side means you get immediate results without having to trailer into a hospital.

In order for the stomach to empty enough to allow for a proper examination, your horse will need to be fasted for 12 hours and no water for 6 hours minimum.



C.A.R.E.S. and T.E.D.



The Equine Department of E.C.V.V.H. is proud to announce the birth of two new programs known as C.A.R.E.S. and T.E.D. This is our way of giving back to those horses who give the gift of mental and physical wellness to those in need.



C.A.R.E.S. Chiropractic and Acupuncture Relieving Equine Soreness.

Through this program, therapy horses in East County will be receiving both acupuncture and chiropractic attention. Once per week, we will be tending to one of the therapeutic riding programs. We will continue to provide this service year round on a rotating basis.

T.E.D. Therapeutic Equine Dentistry. T.E.D. is another way of helping those horses that help people in need. As the name suggests, this program offers dental care to therapy horses. By providing routine, advanced and endodontic dentistry, the doctors at ECVVH will provide these horses a much more comfortable mouth to do their job.

INSULIN UPDATE...RETESTING MYSTERIES SOLVED

There have been some reoccurring questions in regards to retesting an Insulin Resistant (IR) horse.

- Q. Is it safe to inject my horse with corticosteroids?
- A. Prior to corticosteroid usage, insulin should be checked: if high, do not use; if normal, ***proceed with caution***, as the use of corticosteroids, even in an IR horse with normal insulin levels could cause laminitis.
- Q. I had my horse on the IR diet but have added some other dietary changes since then. Is my horse still ok?
- A. Between 30-60 days after any dietary changes, insulin level should be checked.
- Q. My IR horse is not doing well lately, should the insulin levels be rechecked?
- A. If at any time an IR horse "just is not right" we recommend retesting the insulin levels.
- Q. Once my insulin levels have normalized, do I need to retest anymore?
- A. An annual wellness examination with an insulin level recheck is **strongly** recommended for the IR horse.

Be Prepared

Fire season is upon us. Unfortunately, people cannot move fast enough once fires get going out of control. The best thing you can do for you and your horse is have a thought out plan for evacuation. Begin by knowing the safe areas in the county to trailer your horse, and have a plan on how to get your horse(s) there. Have an emergency grab bag with any medications your horse might be on such as Thyro-L, pergolide, or fenugreek. Remember any special food your horse might need, because evacuation sites will most likely not have them available.

Pack dipyrone, bute, and antiseptic ointments. These items will help in cases of mild colic, lameness, and wounds. Veterinarians will be making the rounds for emergencies, but these items may prevent that need.

Have buckets, hay, halters and lead ropes easily accessible.

Acquire an identification method for your horses. This will help ensure that in the chaos of the fire, you are able to find them. **One such method is a microchip, which registers your horse(s) through a nationwide system.** If you would like to have your horse microchipped, just ask us and we will be glad to do it.

If you are prepared for the fires and evacuation, your move to safety will be much smoother.