

Equine Field Service Newsletter Summer 2008

I think the first thing to talk about in this newsletter is the massive tornado that swept through our community. Some people had animals injured or killed, and many had damage to property. There were some remarkable stories including one horse who apparently flew nearly a half mile and was found uninjured. My own foal was picked up out of his pen and transported onto the county road, also without major injury. My neighbors were able to get him back into my pens while I was treating other animals.

This brings me to a question that has been asked several times—how do we prepare for this kind of emergency with our horses? I really did not find a good answer for that question. While it is always important to have an emergency kit, that would have not been very helpful to many people as their entire barns were gone. What I observed to be the most important factor was a network of neighbors. Just as my neighbors were there for me, I repeatedly saw one neighbor offering time or facilities to another. While this disaster was bad for the community, it brought us together and showed the strength we have as a community.



New Intern

Dr. Abigail Martin has joined Colorado State's VTH as the new Equine Ambulatory Intern. She is a recent graduate of the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine. Her interests include equine neonatal care, large animal reproduction and medicine. She obviously likes cows but is also a horse owner and has competed in barrel racing. Let's give her a big Colorado welcome.

Worms!

We have known for a couple years that ascarids, the large roundworms found mostly in young horses, were becoming resistant to ivermectin dewormers. Now researchers in central Kentucky have found evidence that small strongyles are developing ivermectin resistance. This is **not** good news and

reinforces the need to rotate the type of dewormer you use. If you need more information about deworming schedules tailored to your situation, please give us a call.

Hair Whorls

People have attributed all sorts of things to the pattern of hair whorls on a horse's forehead. Whorls above or below the eye may indicate intelligence and of course the double whorl suggests that horse is "the devil's spawn". A new study from Ireland has suggested that hair whorls on the forehead may predict if a horse is right- or left-handed (prefer right or left lead). It seems left-handed horses had more counterclockwise whorls and right-handed horses more clockwise whorls. While this link may not seem obvious to most of us, hair patterning and brain development occur at the same time during development of the embryo.

Avoid The Rattle!

With summer temperatures continuing to climb, snake bite preparedness and awareness for our horse friends can't be overemphasized. Because of the curious nature of horses, most rattlesnake bites occur on the muzzles of horses although bites to the legs are not uncommon. Things to consider having on hand on either excursions or close to home include sheet cotton wraps, vet wrap, and a section of garden hose or at least a couple 20 -35 cc syringe casing with both ends opened up. The garden hose sections or syringe casing placed up the horse's nostril will assist in allowing the horse to breathe in the event of a facial strike with subsequent swelling which closes off the nasal passages.

Venom from snakebites is absorbed very rapidly from a bite site so application of a tourniquet or incising the area is not recommended. Even though some snake bites may not result in venom injection by the snake, it is better to be safe and assume that envenomation has occurred and to seek veterinary care immediately. Rarely, some horses may require a tracheotomy due to massive facial and throat swelling due to envenomation. Furthermore, serious heart complications, although not common, can occur days to weeks following a snake bite.



Dr. Bruce Connally, Dr. Ann Davidson, Dr. Abby Martin

970.297.4472