

ELEVEN POINT EQUINE CLINIC

Welcome to 2010

By: Roger Shaw III, DVM

I recently attended the American Association of Equine Practitioners annual continuing education meeting. This meeting is a great way to reflect on the medical happenings of 2009 as well as learn new information from the very best specialists in the world to use in the new year. The reintroduction and dissemination of the reproductive disease *Contagious Equine Metritis* throughout several states including MO, and the discovery of the previously eradicated disease *Equine Piroplasmosis* in Missouri, and a few months later in Texas, underscore the importance of disease surveillance. These two events continue to impact the international movement of horses as well as the movement of horses within the United States. The Unwanted Horse problem is increasing in importance but the national debate over acceptable solutions is far from over. This will continue to impact the overall welfare of the horse as well as the local and national horse markets. I am sure that 2010 will bring many exciting events to the equine world and am here to help you with any of your horse health needs in the coming year. New to Eleven Point Equine for 2010 is the creation of our website, www.equidr.com/ Please visit our site for information about our practice, new services we offer, as well as timely horse health information.



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Focus on Ophthalmology

By: Roger Shaw III, DVM

Equine eye injury and diseases are a frequent reason that horses are presented for treatment. Horse eyes are among the most delicate eyes in the animal kingdom. Horse eyes are many times more susceptible to inflammatory damage than human or companion animal eyes. It is very important to preserve vision at all cost in the horse due to their intended occupation and due to a horse's intense fight or flight response.

The most common eye injury/ disease is corneal ulcers. These ulcers often start with a small scratch or abrasion to the clear surface of the horse's eye or Cornea. After the surface is damaged it allows environmental bacteria or fungi to gain access to the deeper tissue of the cornea and establish an infection. Many of these microorganisms have the ability to dissolve or melt the surface of the eye fairly rapidly leading to irreversible damage to the eye. Symptoms of corneal ulceration are: squinting, tearing or excessive discharge, eyelid swelling, cloudiness of the cornea, pupil constriction, and drooping of the eyelashes. Diagnosis is obtained by careful examination of the surface of the eye with a bright light and magnification. Small scratches are often only detected by application of a special dye to the surface of the eye. Early treatment, especially prior to establishment of infection, leads to rapid resolution of the problem. After an infection is well established, aggressive prolonged treatment is often necessary to preserve vision.



Because of the horse's exquisite fight or flight response coupled with the presence of small sharp objects present in equine environments, eyelid lacerations are a common occurrence. Maintaining function of the equine eyelid is of paramount importance to the health of the horse's eye. Healthy eyelids are necessary for corneal health. The eyelid is responsible for wiping debris from the cornea and maintaining a healthy tear film to nourish the surface of the eye. All eyelid lacerations must be surgically repaired as soon as possible after injury. Because of the well developed circulation of the eyelid even horrific looking injury's can often be repaired successfully with careful surgical technique.

The other eye disease that is commonplace in the Ozarks is *Equine Recurrent Uveitis* (ERU) or moon blindness. This is a disease in which the horse's own immune system is triggered to attack the eye from the inside out. One commonly identified trigger is a previous infection with leptospira bacteria. The leptospira infection itself rarely causes any identifiable signs. The eye disease usually is noted some time after the leptospira infection is long gone. Other times the trigger of the disease cannot be identified. The clinical signs that owners notice are identical to a corneal ulcer. These signs often will come and go early in the course of the disease. Careful examination by a veterinarian can differentiate the two diseases. Treatment for the two diseases is very different. Uveitis is treated with a drug to dilate the pupil and a topical form of cortisone to decrease the inflammation within the eye. If cortisone is used in an eye with an ulcer it often will cause the ulcer to rapidly worsen and the horse could lose the eye, so a careful examination of the eye by a vet is important. At this time there is no cure for ERU, but the disease can be treated and treatment will often prolong the visual lifespan of the eye(s) for years.

In summary due to the importance of vision to the horse and the sensitivity of the equine eye to injury and disease please seek veterinary care as soon as you notice any problem with your horse's eye. Eye injury's and disease are considered equine emergencies.



Foaling Season Is Upon Us

Just a reminder that foaling season is around the corner. Mares must be removed from Fescue pasture and fescue hay at least 30, preferably 90 days prior to foaling. Fescue is the leading cause of dystocia (difficult or impossible births) and neonatal disease in horses in the ozarks. A medication is available to treat fescue toxicosis but prevention is the best medicine. Mares should receive their annual vaccinations 1 month prior to foaling to boost the immunity that the foal receives from the mares colostrum (first milk). Most foals benefit from the administration of one or two fleet enemas within the first few hours after birth. Enema administration assists the foal with passage of meconium and increases the urge to nurse.

Dates of interest:

February 4th there is an educational meeting in conjunction with the Thayer Saddle Club monthly meeting. Information will be presented about vaccination for disease prevention, and Laminitis prevention and treatment. Food will be served and seating is limited. Please RSVP the clinic to reserve seating.

February 23rd an educational meeting will be held in conjunction with the Mountain View 4-H group. Please contact the Mountain View 4-H leader for more details.

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Transport Regulations

We live in a much smaller world than our parents and grandparents. Horses are selling on the internet, horses are moving all over the US and internationally to compete, and people are moving and taking their horses with them to their new residences. Horses are being transported like never before. Due to the rediscovery of two diseases previously eradicated from the US last year, transportation of horses is being heavily scrutinized again. There are many laws in place that affect the legal movement of horses and other livestock both within the US and internationally. In the next few paragraphs I will review some of these laws.

All states of the United States require that a horse be tested and free of the disease Equine Infectious Anemia for entry into the state. This test is referred to as a Coggins test and was named after its inventor Dr. Coggins. Most states, including Missouri, require that a horse have a negative Coggins test to be moved on public roads inside the state. Arkansas requires that the management of any equine event provide coggins inspectors to inspect each horse participating in the event. The individual states reserve the right to determine the amount of time that the test is valid for. For example in Arkansas a coggins test is valid for a year for movement into the state but the test is only valid for 6 months for the sale of a horse in the state of AR. Missouri law requires the the seller of any horse supply the buyer of the horse with proof of a negative coggins test within the prior year. Most of these laws carry substantial fines for noncompliance.

All states require that the horse be inspected by a veterinarian accredited with the USDA and be accompanied by the original health certificate as it enters the state. Many states have different requirements for entry and those requirements change on a day to day basis based on disease outbreaks in different states. For example Illinois requires that the issuing veterinarian obtain entry permit number within 48 hours of the shipment and will not allow entry of horses residing in certain counties in Texas within the last 30 days. These specific regulations are in place to protect the Illinois horse population from the recent Texas outbreak of Equine Piroplasmosis. If a shipment of horses enters any state without proper documentation that shipment can be detained and quarantined until proper testing and inspection can be obtained at the owners expense. Hefty fines can also apply.

International movement of horses is even more complicated. All countries including Canada and Mexico have their own requirements for entry of horses into their country. Testing and documentation can take as long as a month to complete prior to movement of the horses. Horses will not be allowed to enter foreign countries without proper documentation and/or quarantine periods.

As an accredited equine veterinarian, I can assist you with the proper documentation and testing prior to the movement of your horses. Please contact the office at least 1 week prior to the intended transport of your horses for interstate movement. For international shipments please contact us 1 month prior to intended shipment. Also don't hesitate to call and ask questions concerning the legal shipment of horses. These laws sometimes seem excessive, but they are in place to protect your horses and the entire United States horse industry.