

the EQUINE Healthline

A Monthly Newsletter

June 2008

Equine Vital Signs Review

Temperature, pulse, and respiration (TPR) are three common and important vital signs to assess the status of horses during competitive and trail riding events as well as emergency situations. Learning how to quickly and accurately assess your horse's TPR can be valuable in conditions of performance or rest and knowing what's 'normal' for your horse under these varied conditions will help you identify over-exercise, stress, anxiety, and the onset of infectious conditions. Early identification of these changes will help you in training/conditioning and in the detection of illness which would prompt medical attention.

Go online to <http://www.peneq.com/equinehealthline/0608/> to read the full article.

First Offspring of an Equine Clone

by thehorse.com

Prometea, the blazed Haflinger who gained notoriety in 2003 as the world's first horse clone, has given birth to a colt. Today the Laboratorio di Tecnologie della Riproduzione (LTR) in Cremona, Italy, announced the March 17 arrival of Pegaso, who was produced by a single artificial insemination attempt. Continuing the family tradition of world firsts, Pegaso is the first offspring of an equine clone, and he's apparently healthy and thriving.

Cesare Galli, DVM, and his research team at LTR were responsible for the production of Prometea, who was born on May 28, 2003. The first equine clone, born May 4 of that year, was a mule colt that was followed by the birth of two more cloned mules in June and July, respectively. Mules are sterile, so Prometea was the first candidate for reproducing. She was bred to Haflinger stallion Abendfurst, using artificial insemination.

Go online to <http://www.peneq.com/equinehealthline/0608/> to read the full article.

From the office

Has your contact information changed? Phone & cell numbers changed?

Lately we have been running into more telephone, cell and office numbers that are no longer in service. To make sure your contact numbers are correct, please take a moment to go to our home page at www.peneq.com and click on the "Client Information Update" link and fill out the form provided.

We want to know!

We are always looking at how we can improve our customer service but in order to accomplish this we need to get your feedback on how we are doing. Whether it's a change, good or bad, that you've noticed over the years or a less than positive experience with an individual in the office or one of our doctors or techs—we want to know so we can fix the problems and continue to improve the service we provide. In addition if there are services or products that you haven't been able to find, let us know that as well. It is important that you know that we appreciate your business and the support you have provided the practice over the years.

Please go to our website (www.peneq.com) and click on the link to "Feedback Form" and tell us what you think.

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Upcoming events

6/6-6/8 Western States Horse Expo - Sacramento
6/8 Woodside Vaulters Spring Fest
6/14-6/15 5th Annual Woodside Gaited Horse Show
6/18-6/22 Woodside Circuit Opener - H/J
6/25-6/29 Bay Area Summer Festival - H/J

Go online to <http://www.peneq.com/equinehealthline/0608/> for more information and links to each of these events.

Joint Disease

This month we are covering part two of our 3 part series on Joint Disease. This month, we will discuss the causes of joint problems and how they present to horse owners. Next month, we will review the treatments and therapies available, how they work and how they are implemented. **Go online to <http://www.peneq.com/equinehealthline/0608/> to read the full article.**

Tip of the month

Purina Feed Recall -- Only on the East Coast!

Land O'Lakes Purina Feed LLC announced a recall of certain horse feed products manufactured at three East Coast facilities based upon regulatory tests showing the presence of aflatoxins in excess of FDA action levels. Aflatoxins are a potent form of mycotoxins which are secondary metabolites of molds such as *Aspergillus*. The adverse effects of aflatoxins can be both cumulative and progressive, and at levels greater than 50 ppb (parts per billion) they can result in such signs as fever, weightloss, anorexia (refusal to eat), liver and kidney disease, sluggishness and generalized immune system suppression. The recall is voluntary and precautionary and involves products manufactured at three Eastern plants (Statesville, NC; Harrisburg, PA; and Guilderland, NY.) Products manufactured at these three plants have suspended their use of the suspect source of aflatoxin, and production of feeds after March 10, 2008 are reported to be safe, per Purina spokespersons. All dealers receiving potentially contaminated feed have issued recalls, and these dealers are all located only on the east coast region (a complete list is available on www.thehorse.com. California products are not being recalled. As of this time, we have NO confirmed or reported cases of aflatoxin-related horse health issues. In addition, this incident has again raised the surveyance level of FDA regulatory agencies to the safety and reliability of the numerous feed constituents being utilized in the production of supplements for your horse. Horseowners are encouraged, however, to maintain vigilance in inspecting your feed supplements for freshness and quality. Any indication of mold, abnormal dust, rancid smell, or other abnormality should be investigated thoroughly before feeding. Pay particular attention to high fat supplements, since even though these are "stabilized" for storage, they are especially susceptible to deterioration in warm summer weather conditions.

Equine Sarcoids - Common but NOT so Benign Tumors!

Sarcoids are the most common skin tumor encountered in horses. They are nodular in appearance and can be categorized into 6 forms for identification and therapeutic consideration. The etiology of equine sarcoids is uncertain. Bovine papilloma virus and Retrovirus organisms have been implicated but there is still debate among researchers. Their manifestation and seriousness varies greatly among horses, and may be partially heritable (similar to viral warts) based upon studies demonstrating a "sarcoid susceptibility gene". Sarcoids generally develop in sites where the skin is thin and there is little hair, but no site is exempt from occurrence. Sarcoids are also common sequelae secondary to previous wounds on the distal limbs and trunk. While equine sarcoids are restricted to skin & subcutaneous tissues, their potentially invasive and expansive nature make them an important tumor to identify and initiate therapy early in order to best ensure successful resolution.

Sarcoids are classified as:

#1 Occult sarcoids occur frequently on thinly haired or hairless areas such as the face and inner thigh. They may have focal hair loss or crusting and may remain quiet for long periods and then awaken if traumatized to become more aggressive.

#2 Verrucose (wart like) sarcoids are usually crusty and wart-like in appearance. There is frequently thickening of the underlying and adjacent skin due to perilesional invasion. Trauma can precipitate conversion to the more invasive fibroblastic form, and these are frequently associated with sites such head, body, and groin.

#3 Nodular sarcoids are large, firm masses which are still encapsulated within the layer of the dermis and epidermis. Subtype A are spherical masses under the skin in which the overlying skin can be moved freely over the underlying sarcoid mass. Subtype B are spherical masses which incorporate the overlying skin which is adhered to its margins. If an associated dermal fibroblastic or verrucose sarcoid overlies the deeper spherical mass, it is termed a "mixed sarcoid". These types can rapidly transform into the malignant form following trauma.

#4 Fibroblastic sarcoids have an ulcerated, fleshy, and highly vascular appearance, bleeding easily if traumatized. Type 1 masses are pedunculated with a large fleshy outgrowth sub by a narrow neck or stalk. Type 2 are characterized by a broader, fibrous base with extensive dermal & subdermal proliferative extensions. These types commonly occur at sites of skin wounds, especially on the lower limbs.

#5 Mixed sarcoids are frequently encountered and are simply a condition of two or more sarcoid types.

#6 Malignant sarcoids are rare and characterized by highly aggressive and invasive behavior. They are often encountered on the face, axilla, or thigh and spread rapidly via lymphatic spread.

Effective therapies vary depending upon the type of sarcoid and it's extensiveness. Surgical excision, cryotherapy, immunoregulation, intralesional Cisplatin ® injection/ implantation, topical cytotoxic drugs, radation, and (perhaps soon) genetic therapy are among the possibilities available to your equine veterinarian. Go to our website at: www.peneq.com for more information and pictures regarding these common but challenging tumors affecting our equine friends.