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Gastroscope Day

In partnership with Boehringer Ingelheim, SEVS offered 25% off gastroscopes and 25% off Gastrogard to any horse with newly diagnosed gastric ulcers. Over the course of 2 days, we saw 12 horses: 9 competition horses and 3 pleasure horses.

The results: 8 horses had mild to severe gastric ulcers, 2 had excess stomach acidity without ulcers, and 2 had healthy stomachs. We would like to thank BI for their generous offer and for helping us keep our patients feeling their best!



Equestrian Canada Drug Withdrawals

Just a reminder that at Equestrian Canada (EC) recognized competitions, prohibited substances must be discontinued prior to competition. It is best to refer to the Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency Equine Elimination Guidelines or speak to your veterinarian to make sure your horse is currently on approved medications and has discontinued banned medications in an appropriate time frame.

First Aid Lecture

Boehringer Ingelheim brought in Dr. Douglas Myers on April 4th for another useful and popular lecture, this time on Equine First Aid. Our plan is to host a follow up bandaging clinic, including basic and advanced bandaging techniques, later this spring.



If you missed the lecture, you can still visit our educational resource 'What is an Emergency?' and bandaging videos on the SEVS website for more information. We hope to post Dr. Myers' Powerpoint presentation on our website in the near future as well!

Preparing for Competition Season

As we roll into spring and summer show season, it is important that our horses are feeling their best internally if we expect them to give us their best in the ring. There are many focus areas which we will touch on briefly.

Part 1: Nutritional Support

The foundation to good health is good nutrition. The foundation to good nutrition is good hay. After that big topic, we get into the supplementation that helps our horses achieve their health and performance needs.

Appropriate supplementation includes:

- Salt and electrolytes: replenish the loss in sweat;
- Natural Vitamin E and organic Selenium: antioxidants for prevention of muscle damage;
- Chelated Zinc: hoof quality and growth;
- Omega 3 and 6 fatty acids: natural anti-inflammatories;
- Pre and probiotics: support sensitive digestive tracts.

Part 2: Disease Prevention

Having your horse's mouth examined yearly is important to make sure they are chewing comfortably and are able to break down their feeds adequately in order to extract the necessary nutrients during the digestion process. On routine exams, the veterinarian can inspect the mouth for sharp enamel points that may be cutting the cheeks or tongue, fractured crowns that could lead to significant infection, and other abnormalities such as transverse ridges, diastemas, steps, ramps, or hooks that can develop from abnormal or uncomfortable chewing.

Vaccinating your horse at least 2 weeks prior to travel against contagious airborne diseases such as Equine Influenza Virus and Equine Herpes Virus will help protect them at these densely populated events. They are also becoming a standard requirement, along with Equine Infectious Anemia (Coggins) testing at many facilities.

Preparing for Competition Season, in 6 parts

Part 3: Soundness Evaluation

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Before sending in your applications for the show season, we would recommend having the vet perform a soundness evaluation early in the season. This will help identify any areas of discomfort or strain before they lead to lameness or behavioural issues once the workload has increased and the pressure to perform has peaked. During these evaluations, common problematic areas such as the feet, the back, the limb joints, etc. can be identified and treatment options can be discussed and employed before any time (and money) is lost during the peak show season.

Part 4: Joint Health

One of the most common conditions to affect performance lifespan is Osteoarthritis (OA). There are many products available on the market. Which is the most appropriate for your horse depends on their discipline, expected competition level, breed, age, and most importantly their soundness evaluation. In other newsletters we have discussed many products in detail but the common therapies include:

- Intra-articular (IA) ie joint injection of biologicals such as Prostride
- IA injection of steroids and hyaluronic acid
- IA injection of polyacrylamide gel such as Noltrex
- Intravenous (IV) injection of hyaluronic acid such as Hy50 or Legend, given monthly
- Intramuscular (IM) injection of polysulfated glycosaminoglycan (PSGAG) such as Adequan, given in series every 6 months
- Oral supplements such as 4cyte, Platinum Joint Care, Equitop Gonex etc which provide oral anti-inflammatories, glucosamines, chondroitin etc.

Part 5: Gut Health

As we have seen for ourselves in our recent gastroscopy day, most of our performance horses suffer from varying degrees of gastric ulcers. It is reported that gastric ulcers are present in 50-60% of competitive horses. Our findings were even higher at 67%. Because we know that Equine Gastric Ulcer Syndrome (EGUS) is associated with stress, and we know that various factors such as transport, altered husbandry, altered environments and increased workload (such as competition) are stressful, we cannot stress enough (pun intended) how important it is to have your horse's stomach evaluated. Depending on behavioural symptoms alone has proven very unreliable. We often see the dramatic horses have healthier stomachs than the quieter horses. You can't be sure unless you look!

And during these competitive season, we recommend giving your horse preventative dose of Gastrogard, and other proven supplements to support the stomach and digestive tract including Equitop Pronutrin and Assure Guard Gold.

Part 6: Lung Health

Travel and competition can stress the immune system, and in particular the respiratory system. The respiratory system is first assaulted with abnormal airflow and hay particles blowing into the respiratory tract during transport. On arrival horses will come into the vicinity of many other unfamiliar horses in a densely populated area. Stressed horses that carry dormant Herpes virus can then start shedding it at competition, unbeknownst to the owner, and may even remain asymptomatic. Lastly, we then ask our horses to perform with maximal exertion often for multiple days at a time. It is not uncommon for horses to come home from competition feeling unwell.

Management Strategies:

- Feeding only wet meals or avoid feeding meals during transport.
- Stopping frequently (every 6-8 hours) to allow your horse to rest and lower their heads
- Do not graze your horse in communal grazing areas and avoid any nose-to-nose contact, and do not allow people who have been petting multiple horses to contact your horse.
- Vaccinate against respiratory diseases well ahead of travel
- Take your horse's temperature in the days leading up to travel until a week after returning from competition and isolate any returning horses if they are sick
- Make sure your horse has a healthy respiratory tract to begin with. Have your vet investigate any coughing or nasal discharge before you leave.