



# VET NOTES

July 2006

## Previous VET NOTES

- June 2006 Disaster Preparedness
- Mare reproductive loss syndrome (MRLS) - May 2006
- April 2006 - Exercise-induced pulmonary hemorrhage
- March 2006 - The use of high speed treadmill to diagnose upper respiratory tract disorders
- February 2006 - Common medications used to assist breeding, cycle regulation and pregnancy maintenance of the mare
- January 2006 - Managing high risk pregnancies

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4747 SW 60th Avenue • De-  
Ocala, FL 34474

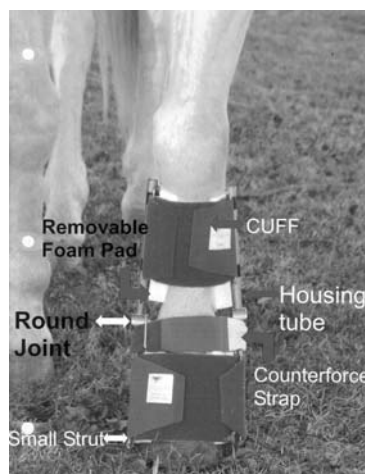
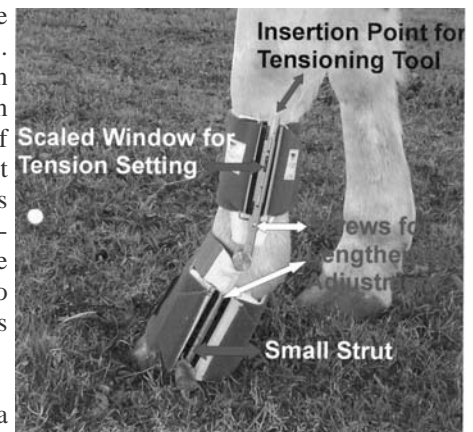
Phone: (352) 237-6151  
Fax: (352) 237-0629  
Email: [PSEH@petersonsmith.com](mailto:PSEH@petersonsmith.com)

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## Managing Limb Deformities in Foal with Dynasplints

This breeding season, Peterson & Smith became aware of a new option in managing contracted foals. A company called Dynasplint, which has been manufacturing human splints for many years, began developing equine splints to deal with a number of abnormalities. I attended a training session about Dynasplint in January, and have used these splints throughout foaling season on patients with deformities ranging from mild upright pasterns to severe carpal contracture to lax fetlocks. There are also splints designed to address angular limb deformities or valgus or varus of carpus or fetlock.

The difference between using PVC splints and a Dynasplint is that the Dynasplints provide "low load prolonged stretch" which allows the contracture to be corrected by gradual, constant stretch as opposed to an initial immobilizing stretch. These splints also allow flexion and extension to continue through the joint, helping to keep the foal more comfortable and encourage normal movement and behavior.



The splints are available through a monthly rental system. They can be utilized while the foal is hospitalized, or can be managed on the farm with follow-up visits after the appropriate person is trained to apply and remove the splint correctly. Duration of splinting varies with condition, severity of deformity, and patient's response. For example, contracted fetlock treatment varied from 3 days to 1 week and carpal contracture treatment usually ranged from 1-3 weeks. The splints are usually used for a maximum of 12 hrs per day, depending on the patient's needs.

As with any bandage or splint that applies pressure to sensitive skin, there is potential for pressure sores or rubs. We attempt to minimize this by bandaging under the splints, and specific pads that can be changed or modified to fit the limb appropriately.

Since it is the end of breeding season, we probably won't use many more splints this year, but this is definitely a good option to keep in mind for next breeding and foaling season.

Jennifer L. Munroe, DVM