



VET NOTES

September 2008

Previous VET NOTES

- August 2008 - Eastern Equine Encephalitis—have you vaccinated
- July 2008 - Castration complications
- June 2008 - The use of acupuncture as a diagnostic aid in the equine lameness exam
- April 2008 - Current parasite control recommendations
- March 2008 - The use of Oxytocin in the post-partum mare
- January 2008 - Preparing your mares for the breeding season
- January 2008 - Proximal hind limb suspensory desmitis: (PSD): Part II: Treatment
- December 2007 - Pleuropneumonia - when shipping fever turns into a nightmare
- November 2007 - Proximal hind limb suspensory desmitis (PSD): Part I: Diagnosis
- August 2007 - Intramuscular injections
- June 2007 - A hard pill to swallow
- April 2007 - The advantages of high fat/low carb diets
- March 2007 - Bandaging
- February 2007 - Single screw compression V. Screws and wire (Transphyseal bridging)

The Yearling Sales

Many of us will find ourselves at the annual Mecca of the Keeneland September Sale over the next few weeks. With a record number of yearlings catalogued, there will be many buying opportunities no matter what size your trailer. As in years past, Dr. Allen Riggs and I will be providing radiographic, endoscopic, and conformational evaluations of many prospective purchases. And, as in years past, we will surely discover an OCD or an asynchronous throat. The following are a few of my thoughts on veterinary evaluations and what we find.

OCD lesions in yearlings have been demonized, bastardized, minimized, and theorized, depending on the latest discussion or article one encounters. OCD is an abbreviation that encompasses many developmental conditions of the bone and cartilage in a joint with genetics, nutrition, and trauma as implicated causes. Many significant radiographic abnormalities within the joints of yearlings are OCD's and may range in severity from an innocuous roughening on the cannon bone to a removable fragment off the tibia to a crippling cyst in the femur. Their type, size, and location contribute to their severity and each should be handled individually to assess the risk, if any, to that horse's athletic career. Risks include lameness, decreased durability, and diminished marketability. Occasionally, surgical intervention is necessary to mitigate one or more of these risks. Generalizations should be avoided when making the ultimate decision for surgery.

The most radiographic rewarding surgeries are fragment removal and the least rewarding are cyst debridement. In many cases, the latter is necessary for racing soundness and the former is not. OCD's do not worsen indefinitely; however, the sequential arthritis arising from the presence of certain OCD's can continually deteriorate the joint, limiting or even preventing the horse's race career. Removing a problematic OCD before commencing into the rigors of training often alleviates the development of arthritis in the joint, resulting in a sounder horse.

(Continued on page 2)

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Problematic conditions of the upper airway lend fewer opportunities for successful corrective intervention. The majority of airflow resistance is encountered through the upper airways. Endoscopic evaluations reveal dynamic or anatomical obstructions to normal airflow, of which, the least desirable include laryngeal hemiplegia and deformed arytenoid cartilages due to chondritis. Because of such a narrow margin between normal and obstructive function, the larynx deserves a scrutinizing evaluation. Epiglottal size, substance, and function may lend some predictability to soft palatal displacement problems; however, this is very subjective and should be interpreted as such.

Veterinary evaluations are a crucial component of a purchaser's overall risk assessment of a future racehorse. Though problems are often found in yearlings affecting their risk, rarely are these problems, with appropriate intervention and management, going to prohibit them from achieving some degree of racing soundness. Veterinarians recognize that their clientele's livelihood notably depends on the information they supply and how yearlings are bought, broken, trained, and sold. Great thought is put into their opinions and recommendations as every horse is important, each problem is unique, and no two clients have the same tolerance for risk.

- January 2007 - The dental health of young performance horses
- December 2006 - Neonatal Isoerythrolysis in foals
- November 2006 - Upper respiratory infections of young Thoroughbreds in training
- October 2006 - Eastern equine encephalitis—time to vaccinate!!
- September 2006 - Gastroscopy
- August 2006 - Rhodococcal pneumonia
- July 2006 - Managing limb deformities in foal with dynaslints
- June 2006 - Disaster preparedness
- May 2006 - Mare reproductive loss syndrome (MRLS)

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