

HOT TO TROT

November-December 2021

Reminders...

- **Clinic Phone Numbers:** Hosmer 605-283-2278 – Eureka 605-284-2509 – Bowdle 605-285-6888 – Wetonka 605-225-7176
- The Emergency Line Phone number for the Hosmer, Eureka and Bowdle Clinics is **(605) 281-0493**.
- The Emergency Line Phone number for Wetonka is **(605) 824-0582**.
- **IF YOU HAVE AN EMERGENCY**, please leave a detailed message at the clinic with the staff or on our cell phones. If you chose not to leave a message, we cannot guarantee a call back on the same day.

Hosmer Veterinary Clinic Annual Nut Fry will be the 2nd Saturday in January. **January 8, 2022**.

Thank you for your patronage in 2021! We wish you a blessed holiday season and look forward to working with you in 2022!

Billy & Dr. Holly, Caleb & Gabe, and the entire crew

This will be our last printed newsletter! If you would like to continue receiving the newsletter by mail, please call to request one. If you would like to receive it via email, please send us your email address at hosmvvet@yahoo.com

Our newsletter can also be viewed on our website at, www.hosmervetclinic.com



Winter Care

By Tom Lenz, DVM, MS, DACT

It has been such a pleasant summer and beautiful fall; it was hard to believe that winter was just around the corner. But that day, the wind shifted, and that night, the temperature was going to dip down below freezing, so it looked like winter was upon us. The good news is that horses are inherently well equipped to handle practically anything that winter can dish out as long as they have a way to get out of the wind. Their long winter coat traps air next to the skin, which helps insulate them against cold weather. In fact, horses in good body condition can withstand temperatures down to -40 degrees Fahrenheit without difficulty.

However, problems can occur when strong winds ruffle the horse's hair and disturb the insulating layer of warm air trapped beneath it. Wet weather, especially cold driving rain or sleet, can also flatten the hair coat, chilling the horse. To prevent this, make sure horses have access to a simple shelter such as a three-sided, southerly facing shed or a heavy tree line that can serve as a windbreak.

Many horse owners prefer to blanket their horses in cold weather, but placing a blanket on a horse with a heavy winter coat can compress the horse's hair and reduce its natural insulating ability. The result is that the blanket might actually decrease the horse's ability to ward off the cold. Horses that are body clipped or worked hard enough to sweat will benefit from a blanket. Blankets are also beneficial short term in extremely cold, wet weather.

When the temperature plunges, the horse has to work harder to maintain its core body temperature. This is especially true in thin horses that lack an insulating layer of fat. To avoid losing weight, horses must increase their caloric intake roughly 15-20 percent for every 10-degree drop in temperature below 30 degrees Fahrenheit.

Contrary to popular belief, its hay, not grain that is the best choice for helping a horse generate body heat. Forages are digested in the large intestine by bacterial fermentation, a process that generates heat and raises the horse's core body temperature. Grain, which is digested in the stomach and small intestine, creates much less heat. So the key is to provide plenty of good-quality hay during very cold weather, free choice, if possible.

Another crucial consideration during the winter months is the horse's water intake. The incidence of impaction (constipation) colic significantly increases during the coldest months and is often due to inadequate water intake and lack of exercise.

A horse cannot meet its daily water requirements by eating snow. Not only does snow not provide enough water, it requires more energy to consume, and can chill old or debilitating horses. Although a horse's water consumption varies depending on temperature, diet and exercise, an average 1000-pound horse requires at least 10 gallons of water each day for maintenance.

Unfortunately, during cold weather, many horses fail to drink enough because the water is too cold and it chills them. Recent research has demonstrated that horses will drink more water during cold weather if the water is warmed to between 45- and 65-degrees Fahrenheit. There are a number of mechanical and electrical devices on the market that will keep tanks or buckets ice-free.



However, if an electrical device is used, ensure that the horse does not have access to the electrical cords because curious horses can chew through the cords and electrocute themselves.

Unless your horse must be shod, he will benefit from having his shoes pulled and going barefoot throughout the winter for two reasons. The first is that removing the shoes allows the foot to expand, especially in the heels, which in turn increases circulation and improves the overall health of the foot. The second is that a horse's bare hoof provides better traction on ice and snow than an iron shoe.

Winter is a wonderful time to ride and enjoy our horses. However, it is imperative that we follow a few commonsense strategies to meet the special demands of cold weather. Bundle up and enjoy the unique beauty of the season.

Equine Dentistry – Floating Fundamentals

By Equimed

Horses start out with temporary baby teeth and, by the age of five, usually have a full set of permanent teeth. The front teeth cut hay and grass, while the cheek teeth grind the forage in a sideways motion, breaking the food into a pulp that is easy to swallow. Unlike some animals that can digest their food with little breakdown by chewing, horses must chew their food sufficiently for it to digest properly. If the horse's teeth don't have a flat surface that can grind the food, the digestive process is hindered.

A mature horse has up to 44 permanent teeth, which keep growing until they are up to 30 years old. Horses that forage for much of their food and eat plenty of grass often need less work on their teeth than horses that eat regular hay because not only do the fibers of heavier grasses require more grinding with the teeth, but they also contain silica, which is abrasive, and helps keep the teeth worn down.

Since the horse's teeth continue to grow for most of its adult life, and because the upper and lower jaws may be of unequal widths, a malocclusion, with abnormal or incorrect contact between the teeth of the upper and lower jaws, may make normal chewing and grinding difficult or impossible.

Typically, horses chew on their metal bits and on nonfood items, such as wood, stone, trees, and plastic. This activity often damages the teeth or causes them to grow unevenly, resulting in sharp points, edges, and spurs that can injure the horse's mouth and make chewing painful. Points and sharp edges develop on the upper cheek teeth toward the outside of the mouth and on the bottom cheek teeth toward the inside of the mouth. These points then cut into the cheeks and tongue of the horse. Once points, spurs, and sharp edges begin to create discomfort, the horse will attempt to relieve the pain by chewing unnaturally in an attempt to grind the food.

As the horse attempts to compensate for the painful, uneven teeth, the problem becomes worse, and teeth can be worked loose and jaw problems may develop. Floating the horse's teeth on a regular basis helps prevent the problems related to uneven or problem teeth and the effect they have on the horse's health and vitality.

Signs that your horse has dental problems:

- Difficulty in chewing, with food dropping from the mouth
- Excessive salivation
- Undigested grain and food particles in manure
- Loss of weight
- Not wanting to have face or muzzle handled
- Resisting having the bridle put on
- Head tossing and difficult handling when riding
- Facial swelling
- Mouth odor
- Unpleasant nasal discharge



Preventing horse dental problems

If your horse's teeth are regularly floated and cared for, most dental problems will be avoided. Depending on your horse's diet, hardness of teeth, and jaw alignment, floating may be necessary on an annual basis, depending on what your veterinarian/dentist prescribes.

Make sure you check your horse's teeth on a regular basis. By noticing any changes in dental surfaces or eating habits, you can be proactive in making sure your horse gets needed dental care. By taking the time and making the effort, you will avoid complications that could affect your horse's health and vitality, as well as the enjoyment you get from your horse.

One Word of Caution: Do not attempt to reach into your horse's mouth and feel the teeth unless you have been taught safe methods for doing so. The horse may bite, or you may shred your fingers on a sharp edge or point of a tooth.