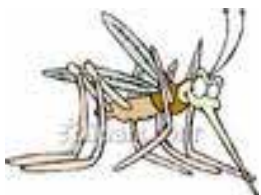


THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 2 Plastic Makes A lot of things Possible...You Can make Recycling Plastics Possible
- 3 Almanzo Wilder: Life Before Laura DVD featuring Morgan Horses is available now!
- 4 Training at an early age: Problematic or beneficial to future musculoskeletal health?
- 5 2008 Sporthorse Tournament brings Olympians, general interest speakers and resources for horse enthusiasts
- 6 Youth Equiday Notice
- 7 Osteochondritis Dessicans: Translated
- 9 Colic AAEP Prevention Tips
- 10 Bucking, Shying and other Attention Deficit Disorders
- 11 Vermont Large Animal Clinic Equine Hospital
- 11 AHC Publishes Horse Industry Guide to Getting Involved in the 2008 Elections



## TRIPLE E, A HEALTH RISK FOR HORSE AND HUMAN

Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis, or EEE, is one of three viruses that cause encephalomyelitis in horses. As with Western Equine Encephalomyelitis (WEE) and Venezuelan Equine Encephalomyelitis (VEE), EEE was named for the region it affects most. So far this fall there have already been two confirmed equine deaths in the northeast; one was in Maine, and the other in Massachusetts. The death of an emu in New Hampshire was also linked to the deadly virus. While these are far fewer cases than the 80 already reported in Florida by the end of August, it is still a concern to both humans and horses in the northeast.

EEE is carried by mosquitoes that have bitten an infected animal. The virus cannot be contracted through direct contact with saliva or nasal discharge as with other viruses. With confirmed mosquito populations carrying the disease, proper precautions should be taken to avoid exposure and the spread of EEE. For horse owners, an inexpensive vaccine is the simplest solution to the problem. The vaccine is effective at preventing the virus and is recommended for areas know to carry the virus. Overall mosquito management is always important. Cutting down, or avoiding standing water when ever possible, as well as participating in local and state mosquito prevention programs can greatly reduce the mosquito population and reduce the risk of exposure.

While there are fewer cases of EEE in humans, it is just as dangerous to humans as it is to horses. Bug repellent, protective clothing and avoiding particularly buggy times of day or locations are the best preventative measures to avoid being exposed to any virus spread by mosquitoes. Precautions to protect yourself are important even if all horses in the area have been vaccinated. There is still a potential for mosquito populations to carry the disease from birds and other mammals capable of contracting the virus.

So how do you know if your horse has contracted EEE? As the name suggests, the

*(Continued on page 11)*

We've got some bug-borne illness running around the North Country! In speaking on October 1, 2008 with Dr. Dallas Maxwell of Palmer's Veterinary Clinic, they just heard back from NYS Department of Ag and Markets that preliminary tests on a horse they'd treated, but ended up putting down, was sick with either EEE or West Nile Virus. Dr. Maxwell noted that there have been several horses in the Champlain to Mooers Forks area that have been sick or died showing similar symptoms. His recommendation: if your spring shots were more than 6 months ago (April) you should consider a booster. Since Miner's horses were all vaccinated in mid-May, I'm not going to panic, but I did take the remaining doses of EEE vaccine and boosted a few that I considered the most vulnerable (yearlings and seniors).

**For more information about EEE**

[www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/arbor/eeefact.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/arbor/eeefact.htm) (CDC)

[www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ceah/cei/taf/emerginganimalhealthissues\\_files/eee.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ceah/cei/taf/emerginganimalhealthissues_files/eee.pdf) (USDA)

# TRAINING AT AN EARLY AGE: PROBLEMATIC OR BENEFICIAL TO FUTURE MUSCULOSKELETAL HEALTH?

Among horse people, there seems to be a wide range of opinions regarding the appropriate age to begin training young horses. There is always controversy surrounding the widely publicized injuries on the race track, often blamed on the extreme level of physical work being asked of very young horses. Based on the results of many studies regarding the subject, it seems that instead of 'when should training begin?' we should be asking 'how much training is appropriate at this age?'

While it is evident that overworking or failure to properly condition a young horse to perform a certain task or discipline can lead to injury and joint problems, it has been shown that early work can actually benefit a horse in later life if done correctly. A study published in the *Journal of Applied Physiology* in 2007 titled, "Can exercise modulate the maturation of functionally different immature tendons in the horse?" by Y. Kasashima, T. Takahashi, H. L. Birch, R. K. W. Smith, and A. E. Goodship, suggested that early exercise could actually help prevent future tendon injuries in horses by positively changing the structure of the tendons associated with work and motion as well as those associated with bone position. The study compared two groups of foals. One group had daily pasture turn out. The second group had the same daily turn out with an additional session of exercise on an equine treadmill 5 times a week throughout the study. At the end of the 440 day study, the energy-storing tendons were evaluated. They found no significant difference between

the two groups. While there was not a significant difference in structure of the tendon between groups as the researchers had predicted, they hypothesized that there had been adaptive changes just from the minimal exercise both groups received from turn out. They concluded that because there were no negative impacts on tendon strength or structure even with the addition of treadmill exercise (which has been found in other similar studies using adult horses) beginning training at a very early age is not damaging to the tendons and may in fact be beneficial.

A second study published in the *Journal of Orthopedic Research*, titled "Exercise of Young Thoroughbred Horses Increases Impact Strength of the Third Metacarpal Bone," by G. C. Reilly, J. D. Currey, and A. E. Goodship, simply hypothesized that different levels of training in young horses would produce different amounts of change in bone strength and structure. The researchers divided a group of young thoroughbred horses into two groups. All horses were walked for forty minutes a day, six days a week. One group received additional exercise either in the form of trotting in a circle for twenty minutes or working on a treadmill at an intensity that increased with time, and according to the horse's increased fitness. At the end of the study the most striking results were that all of the exercised horses had a dramatically better ability to withstand impact in their third metacarpal, or cannon bone. An increase in micro-cracks was also shown with an increase in bone strength. The researchers hypothesized that the stronger the bone was, the greater the number of micro-cracks able to form before a break. This indicates a change in the bone structure that would protect the horse at better on impact.

So what does all of this mean for the average horse trainer? These studies show that some training at an early age is not harmful, and can possibly be beneficial to the horse in later life. The key word is 'some'. While it isn't necessary to wait for your horse to fully mature to begin training, it is possible to overload immature bones and joints. The key is building bone and muscle strength to prevent injury just as you would with an adult horse.

*(Continued on page 11)*

*The yearling colts wonder when work starts for them?*



# ALMANZO WILDER: LIFE BEFORE LAURA DVD FEATURING MORGAN HORSES IS AVAILABLE NOW!

As a Little House on the Prairie fan (OK, crazed junkie as a kid, I admit it), I'm always happy to participate in events at Laura Ingalls' husband's childhood home in Burke, NY. The Almanzo Wilder Homestead has done an amazing job over the years in refurbishing the house and rebuilding the barns to give visitors a sense of life in the mid-1800's as well as telling the story of the Wilder family. James Wilder's reputation as a farmer was known far and wide; this included his prized Morgan Horses.

With lots of help from other area Morgan owners and Miner Institute supporters, we put together versatility demonstrations at the homestead to present the history of the Morgan Horse as well as show a little of how they are enjoyed today. We usually assemble a group of horses to demonstrate type and conformation, driving, western pleasure, dressage, Saddleseat, hunter pleasure and working horses.

Dean Butler, the actor who played "Almanzo" on the television series, is the owner of Legacy Documentaries.



*"Almanzo" getting coached by Dean Butler to look longingly at "Starlight", but not dare to disobey his father's orders never to touch the colts!*

He worked last year to put together a documentary of Almanzo's life "before Laura" and showed it to some test audiences late in 2007 in anticipation of a spring release of the DVD. "Where are Almanzo's beloved horses?" was the question most asked. When Dean heard that the Morgans were going to be there in the summer of 2008, he stopped the presses and made plans to add horses to the film.

It was a full day at the farm on the first day of summer. I'd asked friends Don Sayward and Kate Downs, who had demonstrated with us before, to bring their pair of driving Morgans and beautiful vehicles. Don did such a good job being James Wilder that Dean just kept filming and filming! Since young Almanzo handled some horses, I'd found a perfect fit for the part in a local young man I know through 4H. Jarod Ball had the ideal blend of boyish charm and horse experience to fit the bill and Dean wasn't disappointed with my pick. From Miner, we brought a broodmare, UVM Valkyrie (UVM Promise x UVM Kara) and her 6-week-old filly by our senior stallion, Legacys Viking.

Being an experienced show horse and mom, "Ky" handled being away from home and under lots of lights and cameras like an old pro. Her filly, "Rayne" (still waiting on a registered name) was a natural and is definitely a movie star in training! She participated in many shots in the barn (which since being built a few years ago had never had horses in them!) as well as in the courtyard. Through the entire book *Farmer Boy*, Almanzo longs to have a colt of his own to train. Rayne played a great double for "Starlight", the colt that was given to Almanzo by his father at the end of the story.

The Almanzo Wilder Farm has exclusive rights at this time to sell the DVD out of their museum store. Profits from the sale of the video go directly to supporting this all-volunteer historical site and its operations. Trailers for the video can be seen at the website: [www.almanzowilderfarm.com](http://www.almanzowilderfarm.com). Videos can be ordered by calling their toll-free number 1-866-438-3276. They are \$21.95 + \$1.75 tax + shipping and handling. I can't wait to pick up mine!

—Karen Lassell, [lassell@whminer.com](mailto:lassell@whminer.com)

# 2008 SPORHORSE TOURNAMENT BRINGS OLYMPIANS, GENERAL INTEREST SPEAKERS AND RESOURCES FOR HORSE ENTHUSIASTS

A packed schedule of world class show jumping competition, educational opportunities, vendors, exhibitors and children's activities comes to Syracuse's Oncenter Complex October 29 through November 1. The Sporthorse Tournament will feature the top-ranked US riders, included appearances by all members of the 2008 gold medal Olympic show jumping team. An international field of competitors will all vie for the Budweiser World Cup Qualifier of Syracuse and the Animal Planet Sporthorse Cup (featured broadcast on Animal Planet January 10, 2009). In addition, the finest junior riders in the U.S. will contest the National Horse Show ASPCA Maclay Championship.

In addition to world class show jumping, each year the Invitational presents a host of seminars and clinics sponsored by Practical Horseman and EQUUS Magazine in the EQUUS Educational Arena or the Professional Development Seminar Rooms.

Details of tournament events and seminars along with the complete competition schedule are available at: <http://www.syracuseinvitational.com>.

Some highlights of events outside the competition arena include (free unless noted):

- Two presentations by **Dr. Temple Grandin**, author of *Animals in Translation* and *Thinking in Pictures: and other reports from my life with autism* (ticketed; partial proceeds to benefit the Facilitated Communication Institute at Syracuse University)
- Practical Horseman Presents: *Horse and Rider Potential – An Insider's View* with **George Morris**, coach of the gold medal Olympic team, and noted trainer **John Madden** (ticketed)
- Equine Industry **Career and College Fair** Program
- *How do horses fly?* Learn how horses travel through the friendly skies and experience their accommodations first hand
- **Joseph Pentangelo** of television's **Animal Precinct** will speak on how to spot horse abuse and neglect
- **The Budweiser Clydesdales**
- **"Conversations with the Riders"** will be held throughout the week during which audience members will get a chance to get up close and

personal with some of the top riders at the Tournament

- Cazenovia College **miniature horse drill team**
- Meet local gold medalist **Beezie Madden** at a Q & A session for fans
- *The healing power of horses* – a discussion and demonstration of therapeutic riding with an emphasis on its uses with autism. Session presented by NARHA premier accredited EquiCenter with the support of Syracuse area NARHA member facility From The Ground Up Therapeutic Riding Center
- **USEF Drugs and Medications Workshop** with - Dr. Stephen Schumacher, Chief Administrator of USEF's Equine Drugs & Medications Program (ticketed)
- *A Journey through the Digestive System of the Horse* – with a live endoscopic exam (ticketed)
- Equus Foundation *"Deal or No Deal"* dinner (ticketed)
- **Kids' activities** including the always-popular craft table, autograph sessions, and other activities
- The **Horsin' Around** program will again welcome children from local schools for field trips to the Tournament.

**Miner Institute will have a booth at the Equine Industry College and Career Fair to promote our Summer Experience in Equine Management internship. Stop by our booth to say "hi" on your way through the exhibits!**

The real action, of course, is in the War Memorial competition arena, with a full slate of intense show jumping and top-level riding. While competitions will be going on most of the day in the arena, the Tournament features some for which tickets are required. They are:

## Wednesday, October 29; 7:00 p.m.

- National Horse Show Opening Night Hunter Competitions

## Thursday, October 30; 7:00 p.m.

- Pasmore Stables Horsemans' Cup
- Regular Working Hunter Stake (presented by Brookway Stables)
- Atlas Fence 1.40m Speed

(Continued on page 5)

# YOUTH EQUIDAY NOTICE

**WHAT:** *Youth EquiDay*

**WHO:** *Any & all youth interested in horses (you can bring your parents too....)*

**WHEN:** *Saturday, Nov. 1, 2008 9:30 am -12:00 noon*

**WHERE:** *The Horse Barn at Miner Institute Chazy, NY*

**WHY:** *To learn about horses!*

This year's Youth EquiDay will be in the Horse Barn of Miner Institute, located about 1 mile west of exit 41 of I-87 on Rte. 191. Registration and refreshments will start at 9:30 am. Topics are still being finalized, but you can be sure they'll be fun, useful and interesting! You'll be out of the elements, but it is a barn, so dress accordingly. Call 518-846-7121 x120 or email lassell@whminer.com for more info. Pre-registration isn't necessary, but an RSVP would be appreciated to help with planning this free event.

## FAQ's about Youth EquiDay:

**Is this a Clinton County 4H pointed event?** Yes. If you want full credit, you'll need to be there the whole time and be sure to sign in & out.

**Will we get to ride a horse?** No. Sorry!

**Can anyone come?** Yes, it is free and open to the public, but kids get first dibs on horse-related activities.

**What should I wear?** Comfortable clothes, barn boots, and warm things.

**Will there be something to eat?** Refreshments will be provided at registration and during a short break. There's plenty of space if your club wants to bring lunches to eat as a get-together or to have a meeting.

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*(Sporthorse Tournament, con't from page 4)*

### Friday, October 31; 7:00 p.m.

- Syracuse Corporate Team Challenge
- CN Gambler's Choice

### Saturday, November 1; 2:00 p.m.

- TK99 Speed Derby presented by BMW
- Empire Tractor Ride & Drive
- National Horse Show ASPCA Maclay Final Round
- Budweiser FEI World Cup Qualifier of Syracuse

### Sunday, November 2; 2:00 p.m.

- Animal Planet Sporthorse Cup  
(to be televised Jan. 10, 2009 on Animal Planet)

Tickets for special events and seminars: Tickets for the Morris/Madden clinic and the Professional Seminar Series are available through the Syracuse Invitational web site at <http://www.syracuseinvitational.com> or by calling 315-655-4721.

Tickets for featured competitions: Tickets for featured Tournament competitions (Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 7 PM; Saturday at 2PM and at 7PM; and Sunday at 2PM) range from \$10.00 to \$25.00 and are available through Ticketmaster ([www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com)) and the Oncenter Box Office (315-435-2121). Fans who plan to attend featured competition all week can buy packaged tickets at 25% off at the following P&C locations in the Syracuse area: Nottingham, Fulton, Skaneateles, Cazenovia and Fayetteville. Competitions not listed above as ticketed are free.

The Syracuse Invitational Sporthorse Tournament featuring the 125th National Horse Show welcomes the top-ranked equestrians from across the US and the world to downtown Syracuse to compete at the War Memorial Arena in the Oncenter Complex. The event features a full slate of high-level competition, entertainment, shopping and exhibitions and runs October 29 to November 2, 2008. A 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, the Syracuse Invitational benefits Cornell University Equine Hospital and Vera House.

# OSTEOCHONDritis DESSICANS: TRANSLATED

## *Dr. Diagnosall, the expert pseudo-veterinarian.*

The yearling colt "Ripandsnort" was presented to Dr. Diagnosall with right hind leg lameness. "Ripandsnort" is a Quarter Horse/Thoroughbred/Standardbred/Appaloosa/(insert your favorite breed) that is going to begin training under saddle soon. He has been on a high performance/growth diet and has adequate pasture and some supplemental alfalfa hay available.

Dr. Diagnosall did a general lameness exam, trotted the horse on a hard, level surface, used hoof testers, and performed flexion tests.

He found:

- no obvious signs of injury
- no painful reaction to the hoof testers
- no obvious tendon sheath swelling
- But, flexion tests on the hocks caused the horse to move off slightly more lame after flexion of the right hock.

With the permission of the owners, Dr. Diagnosall took four different radiographs: a front-to-back view, a side-to-side view and two different oblique (i.e. two different angle) shots of "Ripandsnort's" right hock.

## *What did Dr. Diagnosall conclude?*

From the tests, Dr. Diagnosall determined that "Ripandsnort" has Osteochondritis Dessicans (OCD), which is a form of Developmental Orthopedic Disease (DOD). The terminology used by veterinarians to describe DOD can be very confusing to the layman. Developmental Orthopedic Disease encompasses a broad category of musculoskeletal problems that are sometimes referred to as metabolic bone disease, metabolic cartilage disease, or developmental skeletal disease. Examples of DOD include Angular Limb Deformities, Contracted Tendons, Club Feet, and Osteochondrosis. Osteochondrosis refers to problems related to bone and cartilage development, and one type of this is called Osteochondritis Dessicans.

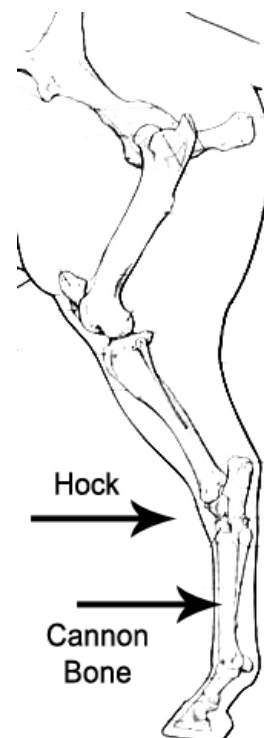
In order to understand "Ripandsnort's" problems, we need to understand how cartilage growth in the joint occurs and what might affect the process. As the horse grows, there are several stages of normal cartilage and bone formation. Normal endochondral ossification (the conversion of cartilage to bone near the joint) involves the following steps: chondrocyte (cartilage cell)

proliferation, maturation and growth, followed by chondrocyte degeneration, death and calcification, vascular invasion, and finally, bone formation and remodeling. As these steps occur, nutrients are provided by two sources, diffusion through the cartilage from the synovial fluid (fluid in the joint) and from the capillaries that are located in the existing bone.

In Osteochondrosis for some reason, the cartilage cells do not go through the normal degeneration process. This leads to a thickening of the cartilage layer, which can cause some of the cartilage cells to be cut off from the blood supply, interfering with nutrient availability. Osteochondrosis may show up on a radiograph as an unevenness, dent or pit in the articulating surface and subchondral bone (bone immediately underlying the articular surface).

Osteochondritis Dessicans can occur when the affected area becomes necrotic (dies). This may cause the formation of a flap (OCD), or cause a piece of the cartilage to come completely loose and float around in the joint, which may ossify with time and is commonly referred to as a joint mouse. The Osteochondritis portion of OCD refers to an inflammatory reaction in the bone marrow and joint. The breakdown of the cartilage can trigger a local inflammatory response by the body.

*This is an example of how an OCD fragment typically looks on a radiograph. The OCD fragment is circled in red. Notice that the fragment seems to "float" within a defect in the main bone.*



The signs of inflammation are pain, swelling, heat, redness and loss of function. The lameness and pain that is observed by the owner is a result of synovitis (inflammation of the lining of the joint capsule). The Dessicans refers to a flap of cartilage that has come loose from the base as a result of the necrosis. When examining the radiographs, Dr. Diagnosall looked for joint mice or flattened areas on the articulating surface. If present, joint mice would show up as radiopaque (white) fragments within the joint space.

The clinical signs of OCD are lameness, swelling, and distension of the joint capsule. Some factors that have been associated with development of OCD and other Developmental Orthopedic Diseases include, genetic predisposition, conformation, mechanical stress and traumatic injury, lack of exercise, rapid growth spurts, endocrine imbalances and nutritional factors. The endocrine factor is usually tied to an imbalance of thyroid hormone, which influences the maturation of chondrocytes. Several nutritional problems have been tied to increased occurrence of OCD as well. Young, growing horses that are fed excess levels of protein and/or energy in their diet may be potential candidates for OCD. Also, deficiencies or imbalances in ratios of calcium to phosphorus can predispose the horse to OCD problems, since those particular minerals are critical components of bone. The Nutrient Requirements of Horses (1989) recommended ratios of calcium to phosphorus can range from 1:1 to 5:1 without being detrimental as long as phosphorus levels in the diet are adequate. Copper and zinc ratios have also been implicated in OCD problems since an excess zinc level will inhibit copper absorption. Copper is an essential component of lysyl oxidase. A deficiency of lysyl oxidase will lead to reduced strength and stability of bone.

#### ***What are the care and treatment options for "Ripandsnort?"***

If Dr. Diagnosall does not find evidence of joint mice or cartilage defects on the radiographs, he may opt for conservative treatment. This could consist of stall rest, nutritional program evaluation and adjustment, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and radiographic reevaluation after 6-12 months. If there continues to be problem after several months, he may choose to try interarticular joint therapy (joint lavage-flushing the joint, or injection of joints with Hyaluronic Acid).

However, if there is evidence of obvious pathological cartilage damage or mice, arthroscopic surgery is the treatment of choice. The flaps, mice and necrotic cartilage can be removed with minimal damage to the surrounding tissues, but not necessarily minimal expense. In addition, Dr. Diagnosall may want to take radiographs of the other hock, since bilateral occurrence of OCD is common.

—Betsy Greene, Ph.D.  
*Extension Equine Specialist, University of Vermont*

*Bohanon, T.C. 1995. The Horse: Diseases and Clinical Management. W.B. Saunders Co. Edited by C.N. Kobluk, T.R. Ames, and R.J. Geor.*

*National Research Council. 1989. Nutrient Requirements of Horses. National Academy Press, Washington, D.C.*

## **CONGRATULATIONS GO TO HD GRAPHITE aka "Bob", and his new person, Jan!**

Bob has left the flatlands of the Champlain Valley in favor of the High Peaks of the Adirondacks. Jan "test drove" Bob at Miner over the course of a few months and asked all the right questions for a first time horse buyer (good questions for 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> time buyers too!). She evaluated his temperament, basic ground manners and current skills under saddle to see if they met her level of experience and expectations. He then was poked, prodded, x-rayed, and examined by a couple of veterinarians for his pre-purchase exam. Smart veterinarians will never "pass" or "fail" a horse, they describe their findings on that specific day and offer their opinion as to how those findings *might* affect the ability of the horse to do the job the new owner is hoping he'll do.

Armed with a whole pile of knowledge, it is still a leap of faith in purchasing a horse, but I'm happy to say that I think both Jan and Bob made great choices and that this is a case of the whole is greater than the sum of two parts!



# PLASTIC MAKES A LOT OF THINGS POSSIBLE...YOU CAN MAKE RECYCLING PLASTICS POSSIBLE

The smell of burning plastic makes my nose cringe and my conscience heavy. It is 2008 and we need to become more serious about recycling our plastics. In agriculture you have plastics in the form of bale wrap, silage covers, pesticide containers, greenhouse plastics, maple tubing and much more. Sometimes these are sent to dumps, other times burned. It is time to take action!!

## What's Wrong With Burning?

Open burning is inefficient and emissions from the mass will be greater from open burning compared to that of controlled incineration of municipal solid waste. A study showed that dioxin will be 20 times greater in open burning systems, while particulate matter is 40 times greater compared to that of controlled systems..

## Why Recycle?

- Open burning contributes to pollutants in the air, these are a risk to human health
- Dumping can compromise the quality of water
- Piles of plastics lying around farms are not pretty to the eye

## How Can I Recycle?

- **Shake** off any debris or dirt and keep plastic away from mud/manure
- **Separate** different types. (do not mix twine with bale wrap or feed bags with silage bags)
- **Store** under cover or out of direct sunlight in as dry as an environment as possible. Roll the film into small bundles or stuff into bags of the same type.

## Then what?

The Recycling Ag Plastics Project (RAPP) is well on its way with collections and demonstrations in Clinton County. **Begin saving your ag plastic today!** This program requires your effort and support. Do not hesitate to contact me for more information or how you can contribute to this program. 518-561-7450 x 106 or blp26@cornell.edu

## How do Horses and Miner fit in?

I'd like to see if horse people can get in on this recycling action. We use plastic-bagged shavings for bedding in the barn and I know many in the North Country do as

well. On or around November 18, 2008, Miner will host the RAPP baler to take care of our dairy-related plastic. The horse barn has offered to host the baler for shavings bags! Follow the directions above and bring your shavings bags (clean and dry) to Miner before November 18<sup>th</sup> and we'll see if we can "keep up with the Joneses"! contact Karen 518-846-7121 x120 or lassell@whminer.com for information about drop-off.

—Blake Putman, blp26@cornell.edu  
Dairy Educator Clinton County

## HEART'S DELIGHT FEATURED HORSE—HD SARATOGA

"Petrie" has been featured a few times in *The Stable Sheet* in the past- she's our first (well, and only...) embryo transfer foal! HD Saratoga (Delmaytion Razmataz x HD Saranac) is a mini-me of her dam Sara in many ways, but inherited the more easy-going attitude from her sire. In all ways, unmistakably Morgan! She's likely to continue to grow and fill out as she matures, but she's going to be refined and petite. She currently measures 14.2 hands and is a classic bay with no white, but shows some roaning on her right hind. Very pretty face, photos do not do her justice! Petrie debuted this summer in the junior western and hunter pleasure divisions, first at the Clinton County Fair and later at the NY Morgan show. She took to the show ring like a seasoned professional and held her own in a very deep western division! She's also great on the trails and will go along quietly on a loose rein. She lunges and longlines well; could easily be broke to drive. Easy to handle on the ground- good for baths, clipping, vet, farrier and trailers well too. I see her as a perfect mount for a small adult wanting to show a little, but also have an easy, fun horse to play with, or as a seriously cute western pleasure horse for a walk-trotter or junior exhibitor. Maybe you see her in your barn? Reasonably priced going into winter at \$4500.

Pictures of "Petrie" can be found on our back page.

# BUCKING, SHYING AND OTHER ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDERS

There may be a few enthusiastic riders out there who look forward to the challenge of riding their horse through a fit of bucking or shying when they mount up. Most of us, however, would prefer that our horses never did either one while we are on their backs.

Whenever horses start behaving badly, we try to give them the benefit of the doubt. The horse that bucks may have a saddle or girth that's pinching him uncomfortably. Or he may simply be high on life and feeling really good. The horse that shies may be hypersensitive to noise or reacting to the excitement of a windy day. Or he may be in need of a lot of patient "spook proofing" to build his confidence and recondition his responses to unfamiliar sights and sounds. The horse that backs full speed across the arena when his rider asks him to go forward may be trying to escape a severe bit or a rider's unrelenting hands.

More often, however, behaviors like bucking, shying, standing up or that unrequested backing are the horse's way of evading something the rider has asked him to do and that he understands perfectly well how to do. If the rider does not recognize what has happened and take measures to correct it immediately, the horse learns that evasion has its rewards. He doesn't have to do whatever it was he didn't want to do. Better yet, if he frightens his rider badly enough, the lesson may end altogether. What a deal!

In our training program, we take horses through four stages of learning. First we show them what we want them to do. When we're sure that they understand what we are showing them, we begin to ask for it. When the horse consistently does what we ask, he has reached a level of sophistication where we can tell him what we want and expect to get the correct response every time. At this stage in the horse's training, if he does not do what we tell him to do, we can enforce our request with stronger aids without upsetting his training program one bit.

If the horse bucks or backs because his equipment is hurting him, it would be unjust to enforce our request. However, if he's bucking because he's having a tantrum or shying at the barn cat out of high spirits and we fail

to enforce our request, we reinforce the evasion. Today's evasion quickly becomes tomorrow's bad habit.

The best way to deal with an evasion is to ride the horse forward assertively. The idea is to channel the horse's evasive energy into forward movement. The average rider finds this a scary thing to do when their horse is behaving badly, however. And if they don't have an independent seat, they may not be capable of riding the horse forward assertively. Their fears allow the horse's evasion to succeed and a bad habit gets started. Our students get a lot of experience riding horses like these when discouraged owners send their horses to Meredith Manor for "reform school."

Upper level riders like a horse that's bursting with energy because they can direct that energy into the horse's work. Less skilled riders may want to make sure an energetic horse has plenty of turnout time during the day or at least before their riding sessions begin so the horse can spend its excess energy playing rather than evading. If your horse has developed a persistent evasion, you seek help from a trainer who can return him to ranks of solid citizens and improve your riding skills to build your confidence.

The best way to prevent the occasional evasion from turning into a regular bad habit is to keep the horse's attention on you at all times. Attention is a learned habit for both the horse and the handler or rider. We start our young horses with a groundwork program we call heeding because its goal is to get the horse to pay complete attention to its handler at all times. At the same time, students learn to put their attention completely on their horse. If you are physically with your horse but mentally thinking about the what kind of pizza you want for dinner or what song you want to download from your computer, you are not paying attention to your horse. So why should he pay attention to you?

When you cultivate the habits of paying attention to your horse every moment you are with him on the ground and of bringing his attention back to you whenever it wanders, those habits carry over into your

riding. To ride well, you must pay attention to every stride the horse takes, stride after stride. When you give your horse that level of attention, you start to automatically pick up on and correct those small losses of attention on the horse's part that are the beginning of an evasion. Then a full blown evasion simply never happens.

Just like people, different horses will have different attention spans. Young horses have short attention spans just like young children. So their lessons should be short enough to end on a good note before they get too tired to pay attention any more. Some horses are more focused while others tend to get distracted easily. Developing concentration—both your own and that of your horse—is a skill that is just as important to good riding as developing balance or understanding the aids.

—Faith Meredith, Director  
Meredith Manor International Equestrian Centre

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*Faith Meredith has successfully trained and competed through FEI levels of dressage during her more than 30 years as a horse professional. She currently coaches riders in dressage, reining, and eventing in her capacity as the Director of Meredith Manor International Equestrian Centre (147 Saddle Lane, Waverly, WV 26184; 800.679.2603; www.meredithmanor.edu), an ACCET accredited equestrian educational institution.*

## **VERMONT LARGE ANIMAL CLINIC EQUINE HOSPITAL**

*Press release from VLACEH*

Vermont Large Animal Clinic-Equine Hospital will start offering ambulatory services to the greater Plattsburgh area in NY. To schedule an appointment contact our New York number: 518-566-6800. Our satellite office is located at 17 Weed Street, Plattsburgh, NY.

Our intention is to eventually establish full-time staff in the NY office to provide a full array of equine care, including after-hours emergency care. You can check our website: [www.vermontequine.com](http://www.vermontequine.com) for updates in the NY area.

Some of the services we will already be able to provide include: equine medicine, dental care, geriatric care, advanced lameness workups, digital radiography, shockwave therapy, portable video endoscopy and gastroscopy and same-day blood work results.

We are excited about our new venture and hope to meet you at a future appointment. "Group rates" on call fees are available if several barns work together to schedule visits.

## **AHC PUBLISHES HORSE INDUSTRY GUIDE TO GETTING INVOLVED IN THE 2008 ELECTIONS**

Washington, DC - The American Horse Council has released "Getting Involved in the 2008 Elections," a federal election guide for the horse industry. The guide stemmed from the program at the AHC's National Issues Forum in Washington explaining how the horse industry could take advantage of the 2008 federal elections to get more involved with their elected representatives.

"The 2008 elections are a great opportunity for horse associations, businesses and individuals to step up and be heard by the candidates, incumbents and those running for the first time," said AHC Chairman Nick Nicholson. "Remember, they want to hear from you, they want your help and most of all they want your votes. This is an opportunity to educate them about the issues important to the horse community and show them your votes are important." The AHC 2008 election guide explains how to do this.

The guide discusses why the horse industry should get involved in the upcoming elections and ways individuals and organizations can go about doing so. It includes sections on why candidates care about the horse community, being able to communicate issues of importance to the horse industry, getting to know the candidates, volunteering and fundraising, as well as knowing the laws governing political activities.

"I believe this guide will be an important resource for all members of the horse community who wish to play a greater role in the democratic process," said AHC President Jay Hickey.

Copies of "Getting Involved in the 2008 Elections" can be obtained by contacting the AHC at (202) 296-4031 or by email at [ahc@horsecouncil.org](mailto:ahc@horsecouncil.org).

# COLIC AAEP PREVENTION TIPS

The American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) publishes many client education articles on many topics, but the opening line of the "Colic Prevention Tips" one should get your attention: The number one killer of horses is colic.

From a mild bellyache to life-threatening colic is the general term for the signs of abdominal pain in horses. It is always best to consult with your veterinarian before doing any treatment at home; if the colic fails to improve or gets worse, the time lost by going it alone or the drugs you gave could mask more severe symptoms leading to a more difficult recovery (at best).

Colic can happen anytime, to any horse, but there are a number of ways to help prevent this dangerous condition in horses. The reason I'm thinking of this now, as we go into fall and winter is that two of the most common causes of colic are things we need to address this season. I'll highlight those in this list of guidelines for prevention from the AAEP:

1. Daily routines are important for feeding and exercise.
2. Feed a high quality diet comprised primarily of roughage (hay). Changes in diet should occur over a 10-day period.
3. Avoid feeding too much grain or energy-dense supplements. (At least half of a horse's diet should be forage; even better is two-thirds!)
4. Divide grain rations into 2-3 small portions and feed hay free choice if possible.
5. \* Set up a regular parasite control program.
6. Provide regular exercise or turnout. Increase intensity and duration of exercise gradually in a conditioning program.
7. \* Provide fresh, clean water at all times. (Exception: excessively hot horse should be given sips of lukewarm water until it is cooled off)
8. Avoid feeding directly off dirt/sand floor or paddock surfaces. (Use a mat)
9. Check feed, bedding, pasture and environment for toxic substances or plants.
10. Reduce stress; big changes in environment or workloads can cause intestinal distress, particular attention should be paid to horses when being transported.

I picked #5 since it is the season of the hard frost. Having to scrape your windshield off on a cold morning should be your reminder to deworm. The frost hopefully has killed the bot flies (those yellow eggs laid by the bot fly really need to come off your horse's legs now!) and with tapeworms being a major cause of colic, horses should be given a dose of ivermectin with praziquantel (brand names: Zimectrin Gold or Equimax).

The season of frozen water buckets isn't too far off either. Number 7 on the list- fresh water- gets harder to accomplish in the winter, but dehydration leads to the number one cause of colic in winter, impactions. Plan now for how you'll provide water on those long cold days and nights to keep your horse's insides well lubricated.

More articles on horse health are available at the AAEP's website: [www.aaep.org](http://www.aaep.org).

—Karen Lassell, [lassell@whminer.com](mailto:lassell@whminer.com)

*(EEE—con't from page 1)*

virus causes inflammation of the central nervous system. The first symptom noticed is usually a high fever lasting a day or less followed by a variety of neurological symptoms. This includes abnormal gait and paralysis. The disease progresses quickly in only a few short days and is fatal in up to 90% of cases.

And how do you know if you have contracted EEE? Although it is very rare in humans, (The CDC states an average of 5 cases a year) it is a possibility. Symptoms may be very mild and flu like, or severe with neurological symptoms ultimately leading to coma and death. There is no treatment for the disease in horse or human and most survivors will not recover fully.

*(Training at early age —con't from page 3)*

Most importantly, listen to what your horse is telling you. Pain or hesitation in work may mean you are asking too much too quickly. Proper conditioning and strength building throughout your horse's life can mean a reduced risk of injury. More time in the saddle and less time with the vet is never a bad thing.

—Claire Gebben, *Equine Intern*



William H. Miner Agricultural Research Institute  
1034 Miner Farm Road  
P.O. Box 90  
Chazy, NY 12921

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*Stefanie Spierer, a summer experience student, worked with Petrie to prepare her for first show.*



*The pair showed in hunter and western pleasure at the county fair.*