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## GET SET FOR SHOW SEASON

*By Kim Chester*



Kim Chester

With show season just around the corner, many of you are working diligently to get your horses ready to show their stuff. You get all the major veterinary treatments done to make sure your horses can make it through the season with minimal problems.

Thankfully, by the time the season starts, all you have to do is maintenance work. Equine therapy is not just for horses that are injured, it is also a way to maintain your horses through the show season. Some of the most common nagging conditions associated with training are sore and tight backs, tendons and gluteal muscles. If not addressed

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our 12th annual Horse Owner Seminar was a success. The topic: Common Diseases of Florida Horses seemed to interest many Florida horse owners. Dr. Dawn Logas, specialist in animal dermatology, helped many owners understand how to recognize common skin problems in horses and some suggestions on how to avoid these problems. Dr. Rob MacKay gave a thorough instructional lecture on EPM and how it is transmitted to the horse. He showed videos of horses with EPM. Everyone left with not only great door prizes but a wealth of knowledge as well.



Dr. Denney-Jones

In August, Stefanie Broadwell, our part-time vet assistant, flew the coop and left for veterinary school. She wrote about her journey and that is in this newsletter. We all wish her the best. We have 3 articles on getting your horse ready for the show season as well as a FEVS pre-season show special.

Don't forget to put your mares under lights Dec 1st in order for them to be ready for breeding season starting Feb 15th!

*E. Denney-Jones, DVM*

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bigger problems, causing you to miss training and part of a season. There are ways to incorporate the help of equine therapy into your maintenance program.

Usually you can predict when your horse is going to get additional soreness from training. Sometimes it's when training is bumped up a notch or two; sometimes it's when your horse is ridden in unfamiliar footing. So plan ahead! Schedule therapy treatments to begin just as you bump up the level of training. If your horse usually comes home from certain shows with soreness, schedule therapy treatments to start immediately after you get back from the show. Otherwise, start therapy at least two to three weeks out from the show. This way you allow sufficient time for therapy to work wonders on your horse. Your horse will be much more comfortable and suffer less pain, allowing both you and your horse to get the most out of each training session. One or two therapy sessions a week for a couple of weeks in many cases is sufficient.

Don't forget to stretch! Many of you know some basic stretches. Stretches are best when performed after a warm-up, whether in hand or under saddle. They increase blood flow, improve muscle extensibility and heighten body awareness among many benefits. I show horse owners how to perform some

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of the basic stretches properly and safely and the importance of incorporating them into your daily routine. I usually stretch a horse when appropriate after a therapy treatment to compliment the areas I work. Some stretches can actually strengthen your horse's core! Research shows that strengthening your horse's core helps reduce the reoccurrence of back pain. I recommend the article "Pilates for Horses?" in the June 2009 issue of The Horse magazine. It contains a wealth of information about techniques you can do to strengthen your horse's core.

What if you can't take your favorite therapist with you to the show? You can still get therapy treatments while you are on the road. Many times, there are therapists at the show to lend you a helping hand. Therapy treatments are excellent for use between chiropractic, acupuncture and massage treatments to help keep your horse soft and supple. When used between joint injections, therapy helps nourish the joint. But beware! Not all therapists are the same. Do your research. Ask questions. Get their references from veterinarians and clients. Call them. All therapists should be willing to communicate with your veterinarian about the therapy program he/she designed for your horse. Another good article to read is "A Sensible Approach to Alternative Therapies" in the November 2008 issue of Equus magazine. It includes what to look out for when searching for an equine therapist.

Don't wait until the last minute. Help your horse through painful bouts more quickly. Schedule FEVS therapy appointments ahead of time for maintenance work. As FEVS equine therapist, I not only treat at the FEVS clinic and at the farm, but I continue treatments at the show so you don't have any interruptions in your horse's therapy program. For more information about how I can help maintain your horse, call me at the office. I will be glad to help any way I can. Until then, good luck at the shows!



*Kim Chester is a 2004 graduate of Midway College in Lexington, KY and has been helping horses with her therapies in the central Florida area since then.*

Using e-stim for back soreness.

## THE EQUINE FOOT: Getting to the bottom of the problem

By Dr. Rachel Helm



Fig. 2

Correct Hoof Angle

The equine foot is a very complex and delicate structure. As such, it is prone to various and sundry problems. This article from Florida Equine Veterinary Services focuses on maintaining a healthy and balanced foot. When talking about the equine foot, it is important to remember that the bony structure of the equine foot, from the fetlock down, is equivalent to only a single human toe! Humans cannot imagine carrying our weight on our tiptoes for only a few minutes, yet horses manage to carry several hundred pounds quite comfortably on only four toes! The hoof itself is composed of the same material as our finger and toenails (keratin) and actually serves as the main weight bearing structure of the foot. When thought of in this way, it is very easy to see why an unbalanced, unhealthy foot can cause many problems.

When looking at a well-balanced foot the inside and outside walls should be straight and even, and the coronary band should be parallel to the ground. In addition, the tubules that



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If you would like to be added to our mailing list, give us a call or send us your address.

**(352) 241-0383**  
**(800) 546-3894**

PO Box 120913  
Clermont, FL 34712

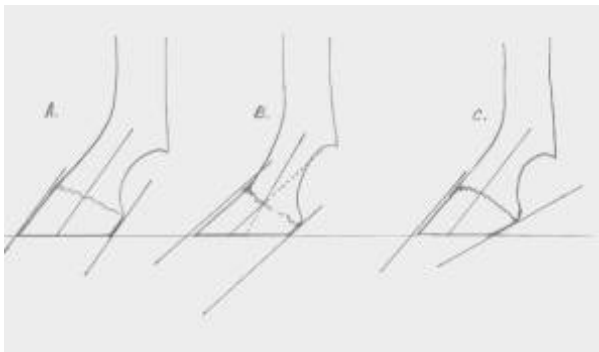
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make up the foot should contact the ground evenly from the toe back to the heel. When the tubules at the heel begin to turn under and grow toward the toe instead of toward the ground, under-run heels begin to develop. As this condition worsens, the foot also begins to develop a broken back pastern angle. This unbalanced condition causes excess stress to the flexor tendons, heel soreness and can contribute to Navicular Syndrome. To help return under-run heels to normal, the toe should be trimmed as short as practical and the heels rasped short. A shoe can then be placed to take pressure off of the heels and allow the tubules to resume normal growth.

One of the most challenging aspects of balanced foot care is trying to keep the inside and outside walls even (medial-lateral balance). This relies as much on art as it does on science. The goal is to keep the weight bearing aspect of the hoof centered so the limb bears weight evenly. Inappropriate balance of the hoof walls can lead to chronic heel soreness, sheared heels, hoof cracks and other lameness issues further up the limb.

There are many aspects of maintaining a healthy, balanced foot. This FEVS article covers a few of the basic features. When deciding how to deal with your horse's particular problem, please seek the advice of your FEVS veterinarian and your farrier. Your FEVS veterinarian can use digital radiography to provide instant information about your horse's specific condition. Your farrier can then use this information to better manage the condition. Also, one of the most important things to keep in mind when dealing with your horse's foot is that while most issues can be managed, very few can be 100 percent corrected. Make changes to the feet slowly and remember that each case is unique! There is no exact recipe. And above all, if you have found a routine that works for your horse and keeps him/her comfortable, stick with it!



A. Normal Foot. B. Foot with low heels and broken pastern angle.  
C. Hoof with under run heels.

## IT TAKES "HARD WORK"

*By Stefanie Broadwell*

As a veterinary assistant at Florida Equine Veterinary Services, and a future veterinarian, I am often asked what it takes to get into veterinary school. I usually answer that question with two words: HARD WORK.

My path to being accepted into vet school was by no means an easy one for myself or my parents, who had to be pet friendly early on. My interest in veterinary medicine began as far back as I can remember. Growing up, my parents had to tolerate both my love for animals and my habit of bringing them home. My first experience in the veterinary field occurred when I was in high school and volunteered at a mixed animal veterinary practice. I continued pursuing my goal by spending countless nights studying at the University of Florida's Animal Science program and working at a small animal hospital.

After four long years of undergraduate school, it was time to apply for vet school. Vet schools look at many aspects of their applicants, including grade point average, graduate record exam scores, extracurricular activities, leadership qualities and experience in the field. After months of waiting by applicants, vet schools will contact them and possibly extend an invitation for an interview. Interviews consist of two to five vets, current students and/or administrators. Patience is critical in the application process! After my interviews, it was several more months until I heard anything from the schools. But all of my hard work and sacrifices paid off because I was accepted into Tuskegee University's Veterinary Medicine Class of 2013!

My advice to future vets? Study hard, stay determined and gain experience. Working with supportive vets is essential. For me, working with the excellent doctors at FEVS has not only given me the confidence that I have chosen the right career path, but I have also learned what personal qualities it takes to become an excellent vet myself!

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**Remember: we can fit you into our schedule faster  
if you haul your horse into the FEVS clinic!**

**FEVS will be closed November 26-27, 2009,  
December 25, 2009, & Jan 1, 2010.**

## CONDITIONING TIPS

By Dr. Heather Farmer

The next few months are typically filled with school, work and family obligations, all leading to less riding days and less time to get in the saddle. To help maximize your exercise program, here is a suggestion:



Dr. Heather Farmer

➤ Place four to five cavaletties in a row approximately three and a half to four feet apart and trot over them at a brisk pace. If you have a pony, you may have to shorten the distance in between the poles. If you do not have cavaletties, use poles on the ground or small flower boxes used to decorate the front of jumps. This exercise simulates trotting up a hill and will increase your horse's hind end muscle tone as well as strengthen the lumbar back muscles. This is because as your horse trots over the poles they swing his/her hind end higher in motion. You can also do the same exercise on a 30m circle to keep your work out different.



Trotting over poles, the first step to adding cavaletties

Once you have mastered this exercise, advance to trotting into a cross rail followed by a small series of fences (2-3) placed approximately seven feet apart. This will also help your horse build his/her hind end muscles.

## OFFICE HOURS

Call Lynne to make your horse appointment Monday through Friday 8-11am and 12-4pm. Our office at 19801 CR 561 in

Look for the next issue of Horse Sense in Winter 2009!



**Your horse's health is our business.**