

Stable Sheet



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IT'S NOT ABOUT THE RIBBON

Most of us enjoy winning ribbons at horse shows because they bring a sense of accomplishment, and quite simply it is nice to be a winner. The problem with ribbons as the only measure of worth is that sometimes you get a ribbon you didn't really deserve (the judge missed your horse's melt down or the wrong



lead). Other times we don't get the ribbon we felt was earned when the judge misses the other exhibitors' mistakes or doesn't prefer your horse's way of going. This is where we should adopt the mantra of "winning isn't everything"

because indeed, there is so much more to value in our equine pursuits!

First things first, decide to do it! And here's why.

Horse shows are all about setting and achieving goals; win or lose, you should feel good about your efforts and accomplishments.

No matter how much you practice at home, there are certain things you can only learn by going somewhere new. Horses react differently

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SAVE THE DATE:
Youth EquiDay is Saturday, Nov 2, 2019!
 Registration and refreshments: 9-9:30 am
 Program: 9:30 am - 12 pm
 Topics will be announced soon!

LEPTOSPIROSIS: A ZOOONOTIC DISEASE THAT AFFECTS HORSES

Life can be susceptible to itself; microscopic particles can create chaos in the more complex ways of life, mocking physical and immunological barriers. It is like that, noticing how fragile life is, it's how you can talk about zoonotic diseases. This was brought home to Miner Institute this spring when a broodmare suffered a late term abortion believed to be caused by lepto.

Zoonotic describes diseases that can be transmitted between humans and animals. Despite all the advances in the health field, diseases continue to evolve as well and keep zoonoses a concern to human and animal wellness.

Equines are no exception; they can catch and transmit several diseases which owners should be aware; this article will focus on Leptospirosis. Lepto is found around the world, but is especially prevalent in humid subtropical or tropical climates and has epidemic potential there. It often peaks seasonally, sometimes in outbreaks, and has been linked to climate changes or natural disasters.

Leptospira is the causative bacteria and it is divided into several different species. There are two variations, known as serovars, (Pomona type kennewicki and Grippotyphosa) that are the most common causes of equine leptospirosis in North America. Horses are thought to be a maintenance host for this organism. Clinical leptospirosis in horses is most commonly associated with abortions and recurrent uveitis (moonblindness) and less commonly known to cause acute renal failure, and pulmonary or systemic illness in foals.

How do horses get infected?

- An infected animal like raccoons, foxes, rodents, or skunks, which are common carriers, urinates in a water source and the horse then drinks the contaminated water, such as a stream in a pasture or a stagnant pond.
- An infected animal urinates on the hay, or grain; the horse then eats the contaminated feed.
- Infected blood or urine gains access through a cut or abrasion on the horse's skin or through mucus membranes in the eyes, mouth, or nostrils.

What are the symptoms of infection?

- Fever
- Lack of appetite and depression
- Weight loss
- Eye redness and discharge
- Sensitivity to light, squinting, or excessive blinking
- Swelling around the eyes
- Cloudiness in the eyes
- Muscle spasm in the eyes
- Jaundice (yellowing skin pigment)
- Late term abortion
- Uveitis (eye infection)
- Blindness
- Dysuria (difficulty urinating)
- Abdominal pain

What to do when you see symptoms?

Start with calling your veterinarian. Miner's mare's blood tested positive only for a Lepto infection. Once diagnosed the following steps are likely to be advised, though is important to follow the instructions if your vet. First set up a quarantine stall or space; the infected horse should not have contact with

other horses to prevent contagious risks. Depending on how sick the horse is, antibiotic therapy may be prescribed to prevent secondary infections. IV fluids or a blood transfusion can support the horse if it is dehydrated or anemic. Follow-up visits to monitor progress and to recheck for the bacteria are important. Since Lepto is zoonotic, biosecurity measures should be undertaken by barn staff; gloves should also be worn while cleaning the stall, feeding buckets, and water troughs. A disinfecting foot bath should also be placed by the door of the stall so that any person that walks can disinfect their shoes when leaving the stall. It is also recommended to spray the clothes with disinfectant spray, such as Lysol.

Preventive measures

- Reduce exposure to streams and stagnant water
- Disinfect stalls, buckets and troughs frequently and specially during rainy season
- Test horses that have had exposure to infected horses or other infected animals
- Control the rodent population
- Ask your veterinarian for the availability of vaccinations

Even though life seems fragile at times, science progresses to discover options. For many zoonotic diseases, there are faster diagnoses and preventative measures such as vaccinations, disinfecting, and management protocols.

— *Angélica Torres Rodríguez*
Summer Equine Intern
Pontifical Catholic University
of Puerto Rico

DROOL-WORTHY PASTURES

I wish the only drool-worthy pastures were the lush, green fields of Kentucky Blue Grass we all envision, but alas, we have some turnout spaces with red clover in it that is drool-worthy, but in a different way. Horses LOVE the taste of those little leaves and the specific fungus, *Rhizoctonia leguminicola*, infects many varieties of legumes, but apparently it doesn't affect the flavor very much. In the plant, this is also called "black patch disease" as it causes dark blotches on the starting on undersides of the leaves of the clover, but eventually can be found on the whole plant. It thrives best in moist, rainy environments, but even with Chazy's mostly dry summer, we've had a few slobbery horses.

It is the alkaloid slaframine produced by the fungus that causes the excessive salivation. While it is unpleasant to dodge great slimy spitballs, biggest danger to the horse is dehydration. If your horse shows signs of hyper-salivation, you should check the pasture (or your hay) for signs of the clover and fungal infection and then make sure that your horse has adequate fresh, clean water at all times available. In rare cases and unrelated to the hyper-salivation, alsike clover or red clover seems to be suspect in photosensitivity on white markings on the muzzle or pasterns and also liver issues, but the exact mechanism of these problems is unknown.

The good news is that this too shall pass! Even bringing the horse in overnight away from the grazing paddock with the infected clover will slow down the saliva production.

— Karen Lassell
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HORSE SHOWS, Continued from Page 1

in new and unfamiliar places, and a good rider should (hopefully) be able to manage their horse in any location, not just the arena you ride in every day. Practice, patience, and listening to your horse are how you are going to know when to take the next step. The exposure will be helpful even if you aren't planning to ride at a horse show. Practice walking your horse on and off the trailer and maybe going for a short drive while the weather feels good. Walk your horse around the grounds, even if this means walking along the outside of the arena instead of in. Showing your horse new sights and just allowing them to see and take in new scenery is already a great step in the right direction. It will be great information to you as his trainer to see how the horse processed the novel experience. Having a horse that can trailer calmly and who is used to see new scenery is already a huge win.

When you do get into the saddle and enter that show ring, you are deepening your connection with your horse. Many riders,

myself included, get nervous at horse shows. We have to struggle to overcome these fears and ride as well as we know how to. We put trust into our horse and faith in our ability to not only show the judge your skills, but demonstrate to yourself and your horse what a good team you can be. When you overcome fears together, there is a whole new level of partnership. Sometimes you are an experienced rider and traveling to the show is mostly for the horse's learning; other times it is you who needs the exposure and the horse has your back. Mostly, it offers an opportunity to understand your horse better and reach a goal in your partnership.

Heart's Delight Farm stands a Morgan stallion, Privilege, who is owned by Christopher and Janet Morris of Paradise Morgans. A previous world champion in western pleasure, he is a schoolmaster teaching me every single day I ride him. Recently, I had the opportunity to ride him in a couple of western dressage tests at the Lippitt Country Show in Tunbridge, VT. I

entered the ring knowing he had my back, but I needed the experience and exposure of doing a dressage test for the first time. HD Jefferson on the other hand, is a sweet young gelding being ridden by our other year-long intern, Charlotte. Tommy has travelled off the farm a few times to practice exposure to the show environment; our hopes are for him to go to more shows this season and take the next step to showing under saddle.

Our horses will only go as far as we take them. Horse shows are just one of the many great ways to accomplish this. Regardless of your experience, supporting your local shows will keep the sense of community alive and continue to provide fun, familiar and low-pressure ways to advance your horse's training. Yes winning is fun, but the real value of showing can be returning the focus to the team you and your horse are.

— ShyAnne Koehler
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BEHAVIORAL ISSUE OR PAIN?

Imagine if your favorite easy-going horse bucked you off during a ride, you might assume that something spooked your horse or that the horse had a bad day. What if it happened again the next day? This is likely not a coincidence... You may quickly conclude that your horse has a behavioral problem and attempt to train them more and be tempted to add more forceful or restrictive equipment, a stronger bit, a tighter noseband, but to no avail. The horse only seems to be getting more frustrated and exceedingly difficult to ride. Maybe this isn't behavioral; perhaps pain is the source of the problem, not just that he's a "bad" horse.

A horse may become tense, fidgety, or pin its ears when the saddle is put on and gets labeled as "girthy" or "cinchy". Maybe a horse fights a bit being put into their mouth, throws their head around during a ride; must just be argumentative, right? What about a horse that no longer allows you to pick up their feet? These are all very common examples of actions that get overlooked and automatically categorized

as bad behavior, instead of considering the possibility of pain as an explanation. That girthingness could be caused by chiropractic issues or stomach ulcers; the bit argument could be dental pain; and the horse who wouldn't pick up their foot could be suffering from joint arthritis. Horses don't speak English and they can't simply tell you when something hurts; it is up to us to learn to "hear" what they are trying to say. If your horse begins to display signs of resistance during activities that they seemingly had no issue with prior, consider the possibility of pain before jumping to the conclusion that the horse is simply being naughty.

Horses are sport animals and just like human athletes, horses can suffer a variety of injuries and disease processes such as arthritis, ligament or tendon injuries, sore muscles, bone bruising, and nerve pain, tooth problems, just to name a few. Pain does not always have to be caused by an injury, an ill-fitting saddle, over-tightening a girth, or an

uncomfortable bit can also lead to an unhappy pony who may display signs of resistance. Injuries and equipment issues are not the only culprits, underlying illnesses such as gastric ulcers, hindgut acidosis, or a vitamin E deficiency, for example, can also lead to pain and behavioral challenges in a horse.

If you didn't feel good, or were in pain, you would not want to exercise, and neither does your horse! If your horse is "acting up" or is not able to perform tasks that they were previously able to do, you should consult with your veterinarian to make sure that there isn't something deeper going on. Pushing your horse during an injury or painful event, when they are doing their best to communicate that they are in pain, can ultimately lead to real behavioral issues, as well as damage the relationship with your equine companion.

— Emily Davie
Summer Equine Intern,
Washington State University

CAVALRY DAY AT THE UVM MORGAN HORSE FARM!

Saturday, Sept. 21 10 am - 3 pm

74 Battell Drive, Weybridge, VT

Visit the UVM Morgan Horse Farm, rain or shine, for this family-friendly educational event to learn about the Morgan's important role in the building of this nation: Tourterelle Food Truck will be on hand to vend lunch to guests.

The 1st Vermont Cavalry, "Co. K", will recreate living history through Civil War demonstrations. The day's activities include mounted drills, reenactment tent, informative talks, and historical exhibit on the history of the US Government Morgan Farm and the Morgan horse's role in the Civil War.



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MORGAN HORSE FARM

RAFFLE FILLY TO BENEFIT UVM MORGAN HORSE FARM

Tickets can be purchased at the farm, or by calling 802-388-2011. Tickets are \$2 each or a book of 7 for \$10.

The drawing will be held Oct. 27!



UVM Benevolence (Otter Brook Xenophon x UVM Madeline) is pictured above with her dam.

MINER EXPERIENCE PREPARED BRENNA FOLEY FOR EQUINE CAREER

Brenna Foley says that she “only has positive memories” of her time at Miner. Brenna participated in the Summer Experience in Equine Management program in 2012, just after completing her Bachelors degree in Recreation and Leisure Studies with a concentration in Equine Studies from Houghton College. Brenna returned in September 2013 as the yearlong equine intern. “The education and hard work was a perfect stepping stone into the position I have now.”

Brenna has spent the past five years in the Hudson Valley at Liberty Farms in Ghent, NY. The farm raises and sells livestock, chickens, vegetables, flowers, and hay. They also have a dressage-based training and boarding equestrian center, where Brenna is the assistant manager. Liberty Farms also hosts weddings and events.

“My primary responsibility at the farm is caring for the approximately 30 horses and teaching students better horsemanship and groundwork skills,” Brenna said of her role at Liberty Farms. Brenna says that her role as the year-long equine intern at Miner Institute helped to prepare her for her current job. “One of the most valuable parts was being able to practice managing the farm for the year, while under the protective wing of Karen and the Institute. I hold a similar position to my role at Miner, including managing a team of interns. My weakness was managing people, but working with Karen and the summer interns as a yearlong intern was a valuable introduction to what I’m doing now,” Brenna said.

In addition to her role at Liberty Farms, Brenna has been trained in equine osteopathy. “The goal of osteopathic work is to unblock the nerve pathways



Hippolyta, aka Hippo, is a formerly wild mustang from the Chloride Canyone Herd Management Area in Utah that Brenna gentled.

that travel from the brain, through the spine, ultimately influencing the functionality of the entire body,” Brenna said. Brenna has also started a side business, Freedom Equine Bodywork — “I work on many of the horses at my own farm, and also travel to local farms to perform osteopathic bodywork,” she said. “I have helped many horses find higher potential in their performance and improved well-being.”

Brenna says that she is able to utilize her skills both at her day job and as part of the business she is trying to build. Ultimately, she hopes that Freedom Equine Bodywork provides enough business to support her more full-time, but she says that Liberty Farms has become so much like home, that she wants to stay involved there in some way, too. “I specialize in training people and horses how to best communicate with each other through the horse’s language and improve their relationship on the ground and in the saddle. My goal with all training horses I take on is to develop a safe and willing partner for



Brenna releases the nerve blocks through the withers on a Morgan mare named Mary.

their person, who will also learn to nurture that relationship properly to progress them into whichever discipline they desire to pursue.”

Brenna’s experience at Miner really helped prepare her for her current role in the equine industry and she often recommends the Summer Experience in Equine Management program to college students who she interacts with at Liberty Farms. “We do many things similarly, but we also do many things differently,” Brenna said referring to how Liberty Farms style of management and Miner Institute’s. ”But at the core, we both are nurturing environments that use high-quality practices in caring for our horses. There are many places out there that just aren’t nice places to be a part of. I feel that it is important to experience the different styles of excellent care, it just means more ideas for handling future situations correctly.”

— Rachel Dutil
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MOUTHINESS IN HORSES: WHEN THE HORSE'S FAVORITE FORM OF INTERACTION IS WITH HIS (FRIENDLY) TEETH

As part of my summer internship at Miner Institute, I choose a project horse to work with and train. He is a very friendly 2-year old gelding with a huge personality and an even bigger urge to greet you with teeth.

In addition to all of the normal young horse tendencies such as a shorter attention span and possible increased reactivity to new things, I also had to consider the excessive mouthiness. While the biting was never intended to be mean, it tended to become enhanced in moments of perceived playing, as well as when emotions escalated in times of nervousness, excitement, anxiety, or frustration. Watching him play hard in the gelding paddock, I came to realize that he played mouth games seeing me as more of a “peer” than as “leader”.

Some things I did in my day-to-day handling of him that helped keep his mouth to himself and allow us to focus on training included:

- Keeping him out of my personal space and constantly reminding myself to create clear boundaries so I wasn't inadvertently inviting him closer. Having him on cross-ties or having a helper to hold him when introducing new things like equipment made this easier too.
- When retrieving him from the pasture, I would give him



a greeting and go straight to haltering. As tempting as it was since he loved it, I avoided giving him energetic itchy-scratches as that was perceived as an invitation to play.

- Admittedly, were a few cheat times, I overall avoided hand-feeding treats as a reward and gave him scratches along the back and withers instead. It didn't invite him into my space and it kept him from always assuming I had a treat. I also made sure to avoid rewarding him with pets or scratches near his face. An occasional kiss on the nose couldn't be helped!
- I learned to read his body

language. Luckily for me, he was pretty easy to read and didn't hide his feelings. If I sensed a challenging training day because he had been playing all morning with his pasture mates or the bugs were really bothering him, I'd try diffuse that energy through some quiet free-lunging before settling into the cross-ties.

- Getting introduced to author and clinician Sharon Wilsie's *Horse Speak* practices increased my awareness of the “Play Button” located on the side of the muzzle helped focus my attention on the “Go-Away Face” button located on the cheek to help remind him to keep his space separate from mine.

It's important to keep in mind that both you and your horse have personal space bubbles and when those interact, it can be interpreted by the horse as an invitation to bring the bubbles even closer. Learning to identify where those space bubbles were on me and my project was a critical part of our progress! As tempting as that cute face is, snuggles and face pats can be confusing to the horse as to leadership roles and cause more training struggles. Patience is a virtue when training a horse, with both the horse and yourself!

— Isabel Wohlstadter
Summer Equine Intern
Truman State University

UNDER PRESSURE: ASKING A HORSE TO LOWER HIS HEAD

A good rider wants a horse to stay relaxed, happy and “connected” to them at all times. One crucial aspect to a comfortable ride having a horse reach into the bit and relax its jaw and neck, seeking gentle contact with the rider’s hands. Not only does this allow for the rider to have more control over the horse, but it usually indicates that the horse is feeling at ease. Unfortunately, for green horses or horses that need mental or physical rehabilitation, lowering the head and neck and reaching into a bit can prove a challenge. Many horses experience muscle tightness in their neck and poll. This can cause a chain-reaction of tension through the horse’s topline and negatively affect their movement. There are many ways to encourage a horse to lower the head, however, I am going to discuss one exercise that I’ve learned here at Miner and have found particularly helpful, rein lifts. Picking up the rein to lift the bit and apply a little pressure to the corner of the horse’s mouth then promptly releasing that rein pressure the moment the horse moves its head in the desired direction (down) serves to reinforce that when we have contact with the horse’s mouth, we would like them to carry their head and neck in a down and relaxed fashion.

To introduce rein lifts, start on the ground beside your horse that is tacked up with at least a bridle and reins. Lightly pull the inside rein straight up and back so there is contact to the bit. Retain that same pressure until your horse offers any amount of “give” in the correct direction. Patience is a virtue here as some horses may take a few minutes to give to the rein pressure. Be careful not to just pull harder if you find yourself getting impatient! If the



Danielle waits patiently for Strategy to release tension and lower his head in response to the rein lift.



horse is simply turning its head toward you, with your other hand, gently hold the opposite rein in your hand at the withers to encourage the horse to keep the head and neck pointed straight ahead. It is key that as soon as the horse does lower its head and reaches towards the bit, that you immediately release the pressure (negative reinforcement—the removal of a stimulus) and reward (positive reinforcement such as a scratch on the withers, soothing “good boy”, or even a small treat) for correctly answering your request. Practice this a few times on each side of the horse

until they seem to catch on and are stretching into the bit reliably. After you’ve worked this exercise on the ground, repeat the process while on the horse.

Mount the horse and start by having the horse stand in place. Hold one rein in place against the horse’s neck and with the other rein lightly take pressure straight up and at a slight angle to lift the bit to the corner of the horse’s mouth, just like when practicing on the ground. Again, when the horse stretches its head down, release the rein pressure so the horse hopefully stays stretched into the bit. You can also practice this at the walk and trot. This may take a great deal of time and practice for a horse to become acquainted with this exercise, but hopefully the horse will become more relaxed each time it is ridden and will begin to carry their head and neck in a beautiful, comfortable way. Over time, the movement of the hand and bit in the horse’s mouth will get smaller to the point of it hopefully being imperceptible to someone watching!

Many horses may show resistance to giving to the bit at some point in their training. Working with the horse and targeting sources of discomfort can give a rider clues as to how to work a horse in a way that will help improve the way of going and hopefully the attitude towards his work as well. Simple stretches like these rein lifts can help a horse work through resistances they may be feeling and will ultimately help create a greater connection between a horse and rider.

— Danielle Stephens
Summer Equine Intern
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Dr. Joseph Burke

FEATURED MINER MORGAN: HD BURKE



photo by Christopher Crosby Morris



photo by Jane Hagar Babbie

HD Burke (Canon x UVM Loyalty). Dr. Joseph Burke was the Chair of the Board of Trustees at Miner for many years. More than that, his passion for William Miner's story and vision seemingly was boundless and his legacy of such dedication will endure. Naming horses after places in New York has been a tradition in our breeding program and we long awaited a colt that befit the name "Burke". On May 8, 2018 "Joey" arrived and immediately we all knew this was the one. Curious, handsome, correct, and kind are accurate descriptors, but underrepresent what a great representation of the Morgan breed this colt embodies! Great things to come for this young horse and we're sure he'll wear his name like the badge of honor it was intended to be!

Learn more about the Miner Morgans at www.whminer.org/equine.html