

BVEH Newsletter



Chiropractic for Equines

Once solely thought of as an alternative medicine, chiropractic therapy continues to increase as a valid complementary treatment for several equine maladies.



Dr. Jay Bickers adjusting the C7 vertebra

Chiropractic, derived from the Greek words *cheir* – “hand”, and *praktike* – “business” or “to practice”, works to maintain proper functions of the spinal column. It focuses on the relationship

between structure and function and how that relationship affects preservation and restoration of health, in this case, normal joint motion.

Improperly positioned joints do not move as they should, referred to as a *subluxation*. This can lead to stiffness, discomfort and interference with

(Chiropractic

continued on page 2)

Summer Heat Woes

Proper management is crucial to the care of horses in hot weather. Horse owners should be well educated in how to recognize signs of heat stress, thereby preventing it from turning into life-threatening heat stroke.

It is important to not ask too much of your horses in the summer. Prior to strenuous or athletic work, the horse should be acclimated to the hot temperatures. Even in milder temperatures, heat and humidity can compromise the body’s ability to cool.

During exercise, heat is produced and built up by working muscles. In an effort to remove this heat, more blood flows through the network of capillaries under the skin, cooling the blood to help maintain a reasonable body

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Hop in the Saddle

BVEH is glad you could ride along for the inaugural issue of our newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading the articles and tips tucked inside and broaden your equine horizons. Should you have any questions, or desire further information regarding these subjects, feel free to contact BVEH. Our veterinarians will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Chiropractic *continued from page 1*

normal nerve functions. Spasms, pain and localized swelling may accompany the subluxation. Common causes of subluxations are listed at the end of the article.

These joint fixations can often resolve themselves (thorough rolling, bending, or stretching), but sometimes will persist. An equine chiropractor should be consulted at this point.

The chiropractor will examine the horse, analyzing both posture and gait, along with palpation of muscles along the spine. Once an area is isolated, adjustments are used to restore joint motion. Adjustments treat specific areas of the horse using short, controlled thrusts of the hand. Not only do adjustments return the joint to its normal



Dr. Jay Bickers adjusting the C1 vertebra

range of motion, they ease pain and muscle spasms. Horses, especially those with long-term pain, seem to enjoy the treatments and often will become so relaxed they appear drowsy!

A Healing Touch

Many conditions can be alleviated with chiropractic care, among them stiffness, sore back, scoliosis, certain lamenesses (i.e. obscure lameness or uneven gait) and poor performance (including attitude change). Some of these symptoms may be the result of the horse compensating for pain elsewhere. Talk to your veterinarian about evaluating your animal as a candidate for chiropractic treatments.

Causes of Improper Joint Position

- *Faulty or poorly fitting saddle*
- *Trauma*
- *Improper Riding/Shoeing*
- *Performance Work*
- *Training devices that put the head in unnatural positions*
- *Leg problems*

Did You Know.....

...that the term “subluxation” is used by chiropractors due to its historical connotation and not its literal interpretation: a dislocation (or “being out” as referred to in the lay sense).



Dr. Jay Bickers adjusting ribs

Preventative Maintenance

Used on a regular basis, chiropractic care can prevent minor discomforts from turning into major problems. Keep in mind a single treatment will be rendered ineffective over a period of time.

Regular treatments are recommended, beginning with an initial series of two to five treatments (spanning one to four weeks apart), with follow up therapy four to six months later. Your practitioner can design a course of therapy ideal to your horse.



Use a stream of continuous running cool water to rapidly cool down a hot horse

Heat *continued from page 1*

temperature. Vaporization of water (sweat) is the primary method to dissipate this heat, with exhalation secondary.

Anhydrotic, or non-sweating horses, are especially prone to heat stress. Management of these horses requires extra precautions during warm months. Talk to your vet if you suspect your horse is a non-sweater.

Common signs of heat stress include reduced elasticity in the skin, elevated pulse and respiration rates, profuse sweating and signs of weakness. The temperature will elevate

above 102°. Once these symptoms are recognized, the horse should stop working and be moved to a shaded area (preferably with fans or a breeze).

The horse should also be offered small amounts of water, sprayed with cool water and walked around. Take the horse's temperature every 10 minutes. Call your veterinarian if your horse's vital signs do not return to normal within 30 minutes, or if symptoms of heat stroke are present.

Life-threatening heat stroke is characterized by dry, hot skin, very rapid pulse and respiration rates, unusually high rectal temperatures (103° or greater), and even collapse. If you suspect your horse is suffering from heat stroke, *call your veterinarian immediately!* Follow the steps above while you are waiting for your vet to arrive.



Take precautions when riding in hot and humid conditions

Repro Reminder

Pregnant mares should receive Pneumabort boosters in their 5th, 7th and 9th months of pregnancy.



Making Progress...

A comprehensive USDA study indicates of the more than two million Coggins tests given to horses in 2005, there were less than 0.1% positive tests—that's under 2,000!

Compare that to 1972, when the test was developed—nearly 4% of horses tested positive.

Prevention is Key

Acclimation is crucial. Fit horses can adapt to changes in temperature much easier and they will sweat away fewer electrolytes and proteins. If competitions are planned during the heat of the day be sure to start the acclimation process well in advance.

Once the hottest days set in, try to work your horse early in the day, and if he must be worked during the hottest hours, try to limit ride time and intensity. Always offer fresh water to the horse before, during and after exercise, even if the animal does not appear thirsty. While an idle horse may only drink 10-12 gallons a day, a working animal will often consume in excess of 20 gallons.

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Battle of the Bots

As the summer ends and fall begins, bot season will swarm us once again, and those familiar, pesky yellow eggs will start to appear.

Though they only lay a single egg at a time, females botflies are capable of laying in the range of 200-500 eggs in one week's time, and they will only infest horses, mules and donkeys.

Usually found on your horse's legs, chest, and belly (for ease of access by the lips and mouth), the eggs are hatched when the right combination of warmth, moisture and carbon dioxide are present (i.e. when your horse licks them). The ingested larvae then travel to the stomach, attach to the lining of the stomach where they mature and are passed in the manure eight to ten months later.

Don't panic - nearly 95% of horses have bots and though unlikely to be fatal, larvae can irritate mouth and stomach tissue and cause a general decline in your horse's condition. The horse may experience a bout with colic, lose weight (despite a solid feed program), cause stomach ulcers, or, in rare cases, stomach perforation.

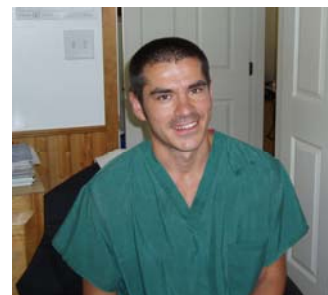
The life cycle of a bot is typically one year. It is important to break this cycle at the earliest stages. The first line of defense in an effort to control bots is to remove eggs from the horse's hair on a daily basis using a bot knife or foam block specially designed to scrape off eggs.

Typically, the first frost will kill off the female bot flies. Shortly after the frost, horse owners should treat their animals with an ivermectin or moxidectin dewormer to help kill larvae already ingested. Since timing is critical, for those in climates where the frost occurs extremely late (or not at all), your veterinarian can help pinpoint the ideal time for treatment and design an effective deworming program.

Bots (Continued on page 5)

Intern Spotlight

You may have noticed new faces around BVEH these days. Meet our interns, Drs. Petrisor Baia (Calin), Reagan Wizbicki, and Miranda Gosselin.



Dr. Petrisor Baia

A native of Severin, Romania, Calin became passionate about horses and animals growing up (his parents still have two horses) and decided to enter a career in veterinary medicine so he could feel more connected to them. He completed his studies at the University of Agricultural Sciences & Veterinary Medicine - Timisoara - Ro.

Three years ago, Calin came to the United States, looking for more in depth exposure and experience with equines. He is especially interested in equine surgery. "I'm looking to enhance my knowledge in surgery, lameness exams, reproduction and in a new area (for me) – cutting," he said.

Interns don't get a lot of time to their selves, but Calin enjoys spending time with his wife, Jenny (a native of Cambodia), riding, and other outdoor activities when he gets a rare moment off. During his time in this state, he also hopes to explore and further his knowledge of Texas.

Dr. Reagan Wizbicki

Dr. Wizbicki is a native of Vancouver Island, Canada, and attended the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan as a member of the class of 2007. Her professional interests include neonatology, lameness, and internal medicine. In her spare time, Reagan enjoys riding reining horses, barrel racing, competing in triathlons, surfing, and mountain biking. In the future Reagan plans to return to work in British Columbia, but is looking forward to her time at BVEH.

Dr. Miranda Gosselin

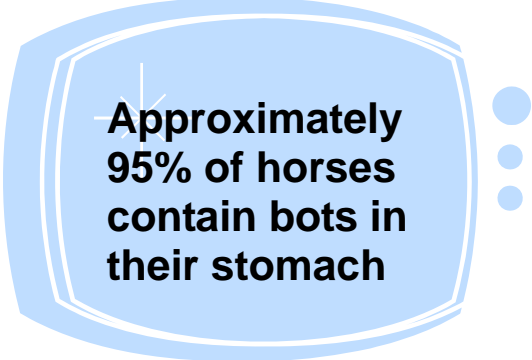
Dr. Gosselin joined the BVEH team this past April after having been in private practice for a year. She is originally from Washington State and received her DVM from WSU in 2006. Her veterinary focus includes equine reproduction, neonatology, and surgery. When Miranda has free time, she enjoys traveling, skiing, reading, sailing, and spending time with her husband and animals. She has an extensive ceramic cat collection. After her year at BVEH, she and her husband are planning on moving to the Tri-State area.

Please join us in welcoming the interns to BVEH.



Bots *(Continued from page 4)*

Along with a good deworming and egg removal program, proper management can help control bots. Be sure you have a plan for appropriate manure management and disposal, pasture rotation, feeding off the ground, and fly control measures. Also, ensure your water troughs are emptied and cleaned on a regular basis.



**Approximately
95% of horses
contain bots in
their stomach**

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A Quick Drink

Though a horse will consume roughly 6-7 gallons of water a day (depending on workload, heat, dry matter and salt/potassium intakes), a horse will spend on average less than 8 minutes a day physically drinking.

This is related to behavior in feral horses: water is not always available, therefore horses must drink when they get the chance; also, the drinking horse is a target for predators.

Heat *(Continued from page 3)*

Normal body functions are dependent on maintaining correct electrolyte balance; imbalance can result in premature fatigue, muscle cramps and colic. In hot weather it is beneficial to include a daily electrolyte supplement in the ration, along with salt. The sodium and chloride in salt contain important ions that are lost in sweat and must be replenished. Individuals vary in requirements, so offering salt free-choice in the form of a block will ensure each horse consumes what it needs. For those horses under working conditions, loose salt may also be added to the grain.

Long days of summer allow ample riding time, but can also be extremely dangerous for horses. Minimize stress and use common sense and good judgment when saddling up this summer. By taking a few simple precautions, horses and riders can both enjoy many safe rides.