

Who and What

- **Fractured ribs**, an injury sometimes found in newborn foals, may be more common than previously believed. In a study conducted at the University of Montreal, 19 of 29 foals examined at an equine clinic for reasons other than thoracic injury were found to have rib fractures. In addition, 82% of **foals with normal-appearing x-rays had rib fractures** diagnosed by **ultrasound**. Females were affected more often than males in this group, and fractures were most common on the left side.
- The horse industry in **Colorado** produces a total economic impact of around **\$1.6 billion annually**. Horse-related jobs provide employment for approximately **102,400 workers**. Almost **260,000 horses** are used in racing, showing, and various other forms of recreation.
- A device used in human medicine has also found a use in **equine diagnostic techniques**. SmartPill, a capsule packed with sensors, can be placed in the horse's stomach via nasogastric tube. It then passes along the **gastrointestinal tract**, transmitting data about **temperature, pressure, and acidity**. A receiver records information about pH and other gut conditions, and a veterinarian can suggest changes in feeding or other management to prevent ulcers, laminitis, and other problems. More information is available at www.smartpillcorp.com.
- Horses with **heaves** may benefit from having their hay immersed or soaked to remove dust and mold particles. A study at the University of Edinburgh showed that simply **immersing the hay before feeding** was effective in removing about half the respirable particles, and soaking the hay for several hours did not remove a significantly greater amount of dust.
- Data collected over the course of 10 years and almost 12,000 **examinations indicate that emergency visits to a veterinarian increased 23% in cats and 28% in dogs during the period around the full moon**. Increases were seen in cardiac arrest, epileptic seizures, and other incidents, but not particularly in traumatic injuries. No data were given for equine health emergencies related to moon phases.
- A note in Horse Journal refutes the claim that there is a link between **cancerous tumors and the microchips** used for equine identification. Some evidence of tumor growth has been seen in rats and mice used for testing of the microchips, but the strains of rodents used in the tests are unusually prone to malignant tumors. Similar tumors are extremely rare in horses, and no increase in malignant growths has been reported in South Africa where all racehorses must be microchipped.
- **Roaring**, the common term for laryngeal hemiplegia, is caused by a nerve and muscle dysfunction that results in a partially collapsed airway, restricting the free movement of air and causing a roaring sound. A common surgical treatment is the **tie-back procedure** in which one side of the throat is sutured into a position that prevents collapse. The tie-back allows the movement of air, but may fail to provide long-term relief in about a third or affected horses. In a promising technique developed

at the New Bolton Center, the surgeon removes some cartilage near the larynx before suturing the tissues. The modified surgery seems to be a more permanent repair for exercising horses.

- What do you do with 100 tons of **manure and stall waste**? Wellington, Florida is home to around 9000 horses, and this is the amount of muck they produce every day. Officials in Wellington are considering a plan to **burn the waste to produce electricity**. A small plant would turn the manure into steam, powering a generator that could produce 24 megawatts of electricity each day. This solution would minimize odor while protecting nearby wildlife sanctuaries from storage facility runoff.
- American **Paint Horse** Association equine registrations total about **79,000 in the United States**, with Texas, Oklahoma, and California boasting the highest numbers. **Canada** is home to 4000 Paints, the same number as the population in all other countries combined. The world total is around 87,000 of these uniquely colored horses.
- **Storing hay before it has dried** thoroughly is a risky practice because of the danger of **spontaneous combustion**. For stacking square bales, the moisture content should be no more than about 18 to 20%, and large round bales are safe to stack when the moisture level reaches about 16 to 18%. Damp hay gives off heat as it cures, sometimes reaching a point at which it can ignite. To determine the temperature deep within a stack of hay, tie a string to a thermometer and lower it into the stored hay through a piece of PVC pipe pushed or driven into the center of the stack. Wait at least ten minutes and then determine the temperature. Readings above 150 degrees indicate the hay may be getting dangerously hot, while a temperature of 175 degrees is a sign that the stack needs to be dismantled immediately. In this case, call the fire department and get help; don't stay around the stack by yourself. **Suspect hay should be monitored for about six weeks after stacking**, although hay that has gotten wet can heat up at any time. Avoid problems by allowing hay to dry properly before baling, stacking loosely, and having plenty of ventilation around and between bales.
- According to a recent survey, the average **horse owner** spends more than **22 hours per week on horse-related activities**. Almost 60% of surveyed owners participated in at least one competitive event during the previous year. More than 1000 horse owners answered questions for the survey.
- How can you convince your horse to **drink "strange" water** on the road or at a show? Here's something to try. Well before the trip, offer your horse water with a little **flavoring**. Try several choices such as water with a little peppermint, molasses, salt, anise, or fruit juice (apple, carrot, grape) mixed in. Add just enough to flavor the water slightly, **and offer plain water as well**. If you find a flavored water that appeals to the horse, offer it for several days and then take the flavoring along as you travel. Water that tastes or smells a little strange may be made more acceptable with the addition of a flavoring that is familiar to the horse.

Wins and Wows

- **Mandy McCutcheon** is the first woman to pass the \$1 million mark in **reining competition**. The Texas resident joins nine men, including her father and her husband, who have reached this milestone. McCutcheon rides horses owned by her father, Tim McQuay, in nonprofessional reining competitions.
- In the **Red Smith Kentucky Derby Writing Contest**, awards went to John Scheinman in the Derby Advance category; **Eric Crawford** in the Sunday Wrap-Up category; **William Nack** in the Derby Feature category; and **Steve Haskin** in the Monday Wrap-Up category. All articles pertained to the running of the 2007 Kentucky Derby.



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