

Kentucky Equine Research's Dr. Stephen E. Duren Co-Authors Book on Equine Nutrition

The *Concise Guide to Nutrition in the Horse*, authored by Dr. David W. Ramey and Dr. Stephen E. Duren, has been published by Howell Book House, New York, as the sixth book in a series designed to present a commonsense approach to horse health and care. Dr. Duren stated, "There are a number of equine nutrition books available that would appeal to the more advanced professional horseman. These books actually talk about designing feed programs and include more detailed information than the average horse person and, certainly, the beginning horseman needs or wants to know. But there is, to my knowledge, none that provides a simple, easy to read explanation of how the equine digestive tract works and why it is important to feed certain things. This is a book that will read well to a horse person in California, Kentucky or New Zealand."

Another distinguishing factor of the book is that, to the authors' knowledge, this effort represents the first time an equine veterinarian and an equine nutritionist have joined together to produce a book written about feeding horses. It is also the first time Dr. Ramey, a private practitioner in southern California, has worked in collaboration with a co-author on one of his books. He explained, "In my clinical practice some of the most common questions I hear involve nutrition. As a result, I know how anxious my clients are to hear about certain aspects of feeding their horses. I looked for someone who had a great deal of experience in this very specific field and found Dr. Duren. He agreed to work with me on this and, as a result, I think we have produced a book that provides very necessary information that is specifically geared towards the horseman."

Dr. Duren, who joined Kentucky Equine Research in 1994, received his B.S. degree in animal science from the University of Idaho and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Kentucky where he conducted research in equine nutrition and exercise physiology. While he has been a co-author on at least 60 different scientific papers and the primary author on 17 others, he has never before worked on a book. He commented, "This has been a very enjoyable and educational experience. Dr. Ramey and I corresponded back and forth for about six months working on the book itself and then it took about that long to finally get the book in print. It was very interesting for me to see what went into publishing a book."

The book contains chapters that discuss the horse's digestive tract, types of feed and what they provide for the horse, specific nutrients, supplements, feeding for growth and reproduction, and a chapter devoted to myths about feeding. Dr. Ramey debunked a number of long-held opinions about horses and their care in his first book, *Horsefeathers*. In this new book the chapter on myths concentrates on some of the same types of beliefs concerning feeding horses. Included in this chapter are

comments about feeding oil to prevent colic, and the relation of vinegar, minerals and alfalfa to intestinal enteroliths. In one section the authors question the practice of feeding bran to horses to act as a laxative, to warm a horse on a cold day and to get water in the horse's system. They maintain that feeding bran or a bran mash occasionally will probably not harm the horse, but it also will not provide the benefits people think it does.

Allowing hay to "cure" before feeding it to horses is also questioned, as well as is the practice of feeding second or third cuttings as opposed to the first cutting of the year. The authors state that the first cutting is every bit as good for a horse as any that follow so long as the hay is processed at the correct time. They state, "It's as if the plant has to figure out how to be nutritious, sort of like a nutritional mulligan."

Dr. Duren stated, "This is not a recipe book for how to feed your horse, but it does provide readers with a clear and easy-to-understand explanation of what horses need in a healthy diet. I think it will be a useful tool for many horsemen." ☺☺

