



## Fall 2015

What a Summer! We made a lot of new friends this Summer, and saw new and old compete, ride, or just enjoy the beautiful weather. Now that we are heading into Fall, we are preparing for colder temperatures and checking in before the Winter sets in.

### VACCINATIONS TO CONSIDER IN THE FALL

- FLU/RHINO
- EWT
- WEST NILE
- LYME
- POTOMAC (IF HEADED SOUTH)

### FALL REMINDERS

As always, every horse has individual needs this time of year involving dentistry, vaccination, hygienic cleaning, etc. Typically horses that will be in contact with other horses will require a booster

for contagious diseases. There have been mosquitoes tested positive for West Nile in both Blydenburg and Connetquot State Park. Lyme disease is prevalent on the island. Many of these diseases have vaccinations available, and depending on your horse's exposure and health, may be recommended in the Fall.

### EVERY HORSE SHOULD HAVE A FECAL EXAMINATION IN THE FALL!

*DEWORMING AFTER THE FIRST FROST IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE TEST AND DEWORM SCHEDULE.*

No matter your horse's condition, environment, and work load, EVERY horse should have a fecal examination performed this time of year to check for parasites. As has been discussed in the past, these examinations can be a glance at your horse's intestinal health but do not guarantee a parasite-free state. Because of this, every horse should receive a deworming after the first frost. For most horses, this will be an ivermectin/praziquantel product, but please confer with your veterinarian before administering any medication.



## ZIRMECTIN GOLD CONCERNS

This past Summer, social media brought to light a concern with a specific deworming product called Zirmectin Gold. It was found that in some cases, this product was causing sores in horses mouths. While Athletic Equine has not encountered any cases of reactions, there have not been any apparent side effects with an equal product, EQUIMAX. After conferring with colleagues who also reported having patients react to Zirmectin Gold, Athletic Equine is now officially NOT recommending this product to clients, since there is an apparently safer alternative (EQUIMAX). Please remember that it is still important to deworm with a praziquantel product at least once a year, as this is one of the few drugs that is effective against Tapeworms.

## WHY PRAZIQUANTEL?

Athletic Equine recommends using a Praziquantel product (usually paired with either ivermectin or moxidectin dewormers) at least once a year, usually in the Fall. Praziquantel is the only medication without doubling the dose that is effective against tapeworms. Tapeworms are extremely rare to diagnose during a regular fecal exam, since they shed large sections of their bodies for replication and not in the form of eggs. These sections are very difficult to catch on examination. Tapeworms can be a serious cause of colic, as well as anemia, lethargy, and ill thrift. They can cause permanent damage to the intestinal tract if left untreated. Because of this, it is part of a routine deworming protocol to include Praziquantel at least once yearly, or in warm climates (for those that head South), at least twice yearly.

# Insurance for your horse

Insurance can be a life saver – literally. The number one reason I recommend having insurance for your horse is so that he/she can have surgery in cases that surgery is required for colic resolution. Colic is such a common ailment, and it can be extremely stressful if your horse gets sick. Having insurance is peace of mind that out of all the things to worry about, at least you won't have to make a decision based on a financial restraint.

You should, however, be very aware of what insurance will and will not cover. Insurance for horses does not work like the human counterpart plans. And due to the vast amount of insurance fraud in the industry, insurance companies have become very restrictive when it comes to coverage. Equine

insurance will cover mortality (usually only for horses with a certain net worth), injury, disease, or illness. Insurance will not cover lameness that is due to “normal wear and tear”, such as arthritis, nor pre-existing conditions that are not new.

There are many insurance brokers, and when shopping for coverage, you should take the following into consideration:

- 1) Value of your horse
- 2) How much coverage you would need from insurance to be able to provide for your horse's colic surgery. In some cases, simple surgery can be between 5-8k without complications, but it is advised that you have enough back-up funds (whether through savings or insurance) to cover at least 10-15k.
- 3) Overall coverage – do they cover advanced imaging diagnostics and if so, at what percentage?
- 4) Are regenerative therapies covered?
- 5) Ask other horse owner's their experiences with insurance companies. Make sure to ask as many people as you can, as everyone is likely to have a different experience
- 6) Call around to many different insurance brokers to get quotes.
- 7) Decide if you want to pay extra premium for loss of use, meaning if your horse gets sick or injured and you can no longer compete with them/use them for their desired function, the insurance would reimburse you. Please note that this is the hardest type of coverage to apply for and usually involves a more extensive examination prior to coverage.
- 8) Age – some insurances will not cover over a certain age limit, while others will still offer coverage but at an increased price.

Once you have chosen your insurance, your veterinarian will likely have to perform an examination and fill out paperwork pertaining to the horse's history and health, the expense of which will be your responsibility. If you have any questions regarding insurance or coverage, please feel free to call us to discuss further.

*PLEASE NOTE THAT WHILE WE ARE HERE FOR YOU TO HELP AS MUCH AS WE CAN, INSURANCE FRAUD IS A FEDERAL OFFENSE AND AS SUCH, ATHLETIC EQUINE CANNOT OMIT OR ALTER INFORMATION TO OBTAIN INSURANCE COVERAGE. WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING.*

# Why have your veterinarian visit?

Long Island is an expensive place to live, let alone to have a horse! It is tempting to cut costs down when possible, not only to keep a “recreational” means, but as we all know these horses become part of our family. With access to so many medications, it can be alluring to try to skip the routine veterinary visits to save on cash. However, keep in mind that there are huge benefits to having your veterinarian check in with your horses at least twice a year:

- Your veterinarian can examine your horse to address any underlying issues, answer questions, and observe your horse for any conditions that you might be unaware of. Sometimes it takes an educated eye to see something that may not be obvious to a horse owner that sees their horse day in and day out. This preventative medicine can avoid a costly and emotionally trying emergency down the line.
- Develop a relationship with your veterinarian so that in times of emergency, they have a commitment and relationship with you and your horse, providing peace of mind when you need it most
- In cases of vaccination reaction, your veterinarian has a direct liaison with drug companies to access the best care and information. Veterinarians also receive updates on recalls and potential problems whereas the general public might not be aware.
- Did you know that drug companies will usually pay for diagnostics and treatment if there is a suspected reaction to a medication or vaccination? Being given by a veterinarian means there is instant support and action, whereas if you give a medication on your own, that support and quick action may be delayed if provided at all, since the onus is on you having given it on your own.
- Changes in healthcare advice occur with some regularity, and having a veterinarian visit means you can use their advice to help decide what is best for your horse. There may be a new outbreak in the area of a disease, or perhaps the recommendations have changed on giving a vaccine.

# Poor weather preparedness

After the Joaquin hurricane scare, Athletic Equine wants to remind everyone to have an emergency plan in place in case of inclement weather!

- MAKE SURE YOUR TRAILER/TRANSPORTATION VEHICLES ARE UP-TO-DATE AND SERVICED. IF YOU DO NOT OWN YOUR OWN TRANSPORTATION MEANS, MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A COMMITMENT FROM SOMEONE IN CASE OF NECESSARY EVACUATION
- KEEP AN EMERGENCY KIT ON HAND – ATHLETIC EQUINE HAS EMERGENCY KITS AVAILABLE FOR SALE
- MICROCHIPPING HELPS ENSURE IDENTIFICATION IF YOUR HORSE IS LOST AND CAN HELP REUNITE QUICKLY. IT IS ALSO PROOF OF OWNERSHIP SO THAT THERE CAN BE NO DISPUTE
- EXAMINE STRUCTURES FOR INSTABILITY OR HAZARDS – REMOVE NAILS, FIX LOOSE BOARDS, REMOVE ANY UNSTABLE TREES AND LIMBS
- HAVE YOUR COGGINS UP-TO-DATE. COGGINS IS REQUIRED FOR TRAVEL ON ALL NYS ROADS AND WILL ALSO HELP WITH PROVING OWNERSHIP SHOULD YOU AND YOUR HORSE BECOME SEPARATED



*Microchipping is a permanent means of identification that can protect your horse and reunite in cases of separation*

# Preparing the older horse for winter

Horses at any age, even horses over 18 years of age, can do very well during the colder months as long as they are in good body condition and health. Horses are living longer and healthier now than they ever have before, so there is less reason to stress about having them encounter the cold winter months.

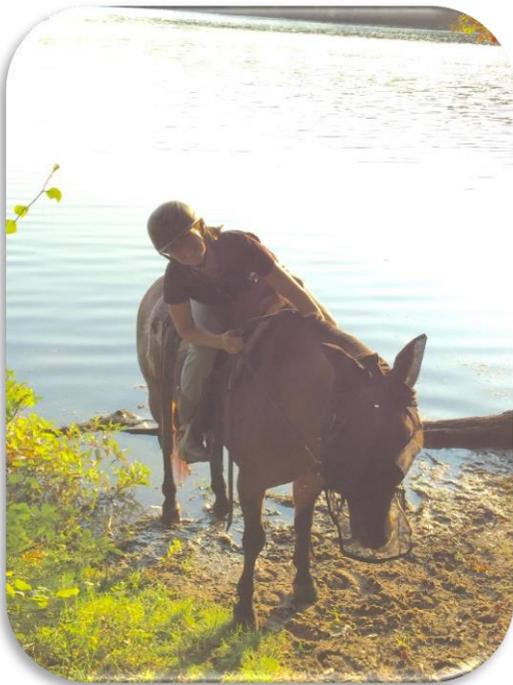
To make sure your older horse is set to take on the winter weather, have your veterinarian check his teeth, body condition, cushingnoid status (a disease common in older horses that can affect immune system function as well as a variety of other signs), foot care, fecal examination, and any other special considerations for your horse. Arthritis can be especially troubling during the cold weather and you will want to discuss with your veterinarian options for keeping your horse moving and pain-free. Turnout should not be avoided unless really icy or wet conditions occur, and in cases where your horse may be stuck inside, make sure to provide extra bedding for cushioning and support. Even handwalking in the aisleway will help from arthritic joints seizing up. Certain medications may be warranted to help alleviate any symptoms, but will need to be prescribed on a case by case basis.

Make sure to get your blankets out to clean them, assess them for damage, and make sure they still fit! Blanket rubs can be painful and get infected, and are not always caught quickly if the blankets remain on for a number of days.

Even though your horse may be getting less exercise during the winter, he/she is still burning a lot of calories trying to keep warm. Make sure you adjust your feeding as needed to keep weight on. It is wise to remove your blankets at least every other day to check your horse's body condition and keep appraised of skin problems, blanket rubs, etc.

Keeping fresh water available is essential to any horse's health. If your horse is not drinking an adequate amount of water, attempt to add warm water to your horse's feed. Feeding very wet hay cubes can help hydrate your horse and generally is well accepted by horses. Occasional (~1-2 times a week) bran mashes soaked heavily in water are generally a good way to get your horse some extra fluids.

Keep a good eye on your horse's weight – if you notice that they are losing weight, dropping feed, acting lethargic, call in the veterinarian. It is important to manage the older horses quickly since they do not recover as well as their younger counterparts, especially in harsher climates.



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**HAPPY TRAILS FROM DR. KARA AND DUNNY BOY!**

**We wish everyone a very beautiful Fall season!**

**ATHLETIC EQUINE VETERINARY SERVICES PA**