

Your Healthy Horse Source



Spring 2011

From the Desk of

What's New

Welcome to spring! I don't know if it's true as I look out my window on this 17th of February, some grass can be seen under the melted snow and the temperature is 52 degrees. As much as I wish it would stay, I am certain that by the time you receive this final version of our news letter, it will be back to being cold.

Recommendations

- **Enroll in Wellness Program.**
- **Have an annual wellness exam performed on your horse.**
- **Yearly immunizations.**
- **Fecal Exam followed by deworming with the proper product.**
- **Dental Care**

In regards to what has been going on around here, we've been quite active in our pursuit of disseminating quality information to anyone who will listen. I myself have spoken to one group of farriers, a group of young children; (grades 1-6), the Grand Rapids Pony Club and a class of veterinary students. I must say that it has been as educational for me as it has been (I hope) for my listeners. I also gave a lecture at our annual client education seminar in January on equine lameness exams. Dr. Rubie also spoke and her topic was Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine. As always, the clinic was well attended with some great questions from all. Thanks to our sponsors, everyone had their fill of food and drink, and I believe everyone left with a door prize.

Once again we are offering our annual "Wellness Program" to our valued clients. For those that are unaware of what our "Wellness Program" is; it is a way for horse owners to pay for a years worth of preventative care at significant savings. This year our "Wellness Program" includes:

- A comprehensive annual physical exam.
- Immunizations of
 - Eastern and Western Encephalomyelitis
 - Tetanus Toxoid
 - Potomac Horse Fever
 - Rabies
 - West Nile Encephalomyelitis
- An annual dental prophylaxis in the fall including sedation and reversal of sedation.
- A fecal exam will be performed at both the spring and fall visit. The fecal exam includes a parasite egg count and an evaluation for the presence of sand in the abdomen.
- **Any and all additional services provided by our veterinarians during the enrollment period are 10% off, including but not limited to:**
 - Additional farm calls*
 - Emergency fees*
 - Additional vaccinations/lameness Evaluations*
 - Radiographs*
 - Blood work including Coggins testing*
 - Interstate Health Papers*
 - Endoscopy*
 - Select Reproductive Services*
 - Surgery*

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Dewormers are not be included, so that we may tailor a program for your specific farms needs.

The cost is \$370.00 for the first horse enrolled and \$280.00 for each additional horse per owner. To take advantage of this special pricing, your enrollment needs to be paid by March 31st.



If you decide that the “Wellness Program” is not for you, perhaps purchasing a “Wellness Exam” during your horses scheduled immunizations might interest you. The annual physical exam or “Wellness Exam” is the single most important thing we do as veterinarians. We feel so strongly about our physical exam, that we will be dispensing “10% Discount” coupons to all of our clients that elect to have this performed during the time we administer the immunizations. The coupon can be used for any one veterinary service/visit necessary following our spring visit within the calendar year. The exam is already priced at a reduced rate when applied during the spring immunizations (\$25.00 vs. \$48.90). With the coupon you will be able to save an additional 10% on one future veterinary visit. For example; if we deem it necessary for your horse to have a dental prophylaxis (floating), which on average costs including the farm call over \$200.00, you will save \$20.00 or more! Or you could apply it to an emergency (God forbid!) which on average costs \$300.00-\$400.00, thus saving you \$30.00-\$40.00. Be sure to ask about this program during our visit.

Another popular activity we initiated last year was our “Seek and Destroy” parasite program. This is where we advise a bi-annual fecal exam to better enable us to specifically direct our parasite deworming program. This is in lieu of administering dewormer hap-hazardly based upon the calendar instead of what the patient truly needs. A fecal exam is still the best buy in town at a cost of \$10.30. If we do find parasite eggs on our exam and recommend a deworming program, the follow up fecal exam to determine whether or not the treatment was successful is free!

We will also be having our “**Drive by Shooting Event**”, scheduled for Saturday, April 2nd from 9:00 to 12 noon. We had such a successful participation last year that we felt obligated to repeat it this year. For those of you who did not participate last year, we will provide your horses’ annual immunizations at our clinic with no office call (i.e. you drive by, and we shoot)!

**Savings Tip for
the Season:
Enroll in the
Wellness Program
and save 10% off
additional services
this calendar year.**

Dr. Bunn’ s Soapbox

A few weeks ago I read an article in the Grand Rapids Press about the computer “Watson” that was one of the contestants on “Jeopardy”. It was so successful as a contestant that it actually won, beating two other “humans” for the grand prize! It is truly amazing that a machine made by man can actually exhibit this degree of artificial intelligence! To input raw data into a machine and have it assimilate the data and conjugate an answer with such speed and accuracy is truly awesome. I have heard that this sort of technology is hoped to be used in the medical field to aid doctors with more rapid and accurate diagnoses. Thereby decreasing mistakes, and ultimately lowering cost of providing care. Imagine, a “Doctor House” for every patient (referring to the popular Fox TV Show).

As I read this article, in spite of my own amazement, I could not help but think of the weakness of such technology, and if it will be abused instead of used for the good it is intended to create. The article in the paper commented on this very issue, saying that the computer is very good at assimilating data but lacks the “human factor”. I read this article with great interest; because in my small world I can see the price we are all paying for technology. Try reading a Text Message from a young person or ask them to do some simple math in their head, or ask someone how to get to their house, and their reply is “don’t you have GPS?” More and more I see medical professionals reaching for their technology to answer their diagnostic dilemmas, instead of basing a diagnoses on a thorough physical exam! I was always taught, and still believe, that most diagnoses are missed due to a failure to do a thorough exam. A critical aspect of that exam is to astutely observe the patient. This I find to be the most challenging of skills to teach the perspective veterinarian! Anyone can learn the medical facts of anatomy, physiology, and pathology (even a computer) but to learn the idiosyncrasies of the equine patient through observation, takes years of study and experience.



Recently I read an article in one of my veterinary periodicals about managing pain in the equine patient. There was a chapter on measuring pain objectively and offered a grading scale by which to judge the degree of pain the patient was exhibiting, based upon certain behavioral characteristics. The purpose of this measuring technique was to judge whether or not the therapy being instituted was providing sufficient pain management. I would like to share some of these parameters with you and you can decide as to your own abilities to judge pain in your horses:

<u>Behavior</u>	<u>Score</u>
Appearance (<i>reluctance to move, restlessness, agitation, and anxiety</i>)	
<i>Bright, lowering head and ears, no reluctance to move</i>	0
<i>Bright and alert, occasional head movements, no reluctance to move</i>	1
<i>Restlessness, pricked up ears, abnormal facial expressions, dilated pupils</i>	2
<i>Excited, continuous body movements, abnormal facial expression</i>	3
Sweating	
<i>No obvious signs of sweat</i>	0
<i>Damp to the touch</i>	1
<i>Wet to the touch, beads of sweat are apparent over the horse's body</i>	2
<i>Excessive sweating, beads of water running off the animal</i>	3
Head movement	
<i>No evidence of discomfort, head straight ahead for the most part</i>	0
<i>Intermittent head movements laterally or vertically, occasional looking at flanks (1-2 times /5 minutes)</i>	1
<i>Intermittent and rapid head movements laterally or vertically, frequently looking at flank (3-4 times/5 minutes), lip curling (3-4 times/5 minutes)</i>	2
<i>Continuous head movements, excessively looking at flank (>5 times/5 minutes), lip curling (>5 times/5 minutes)</i>	3

These are skills that are required to not only be a "good" veterinarian, but also a good "horseman". I once had a very dear client whose perpetual goal in life was to be a *good horseman!* He often commented that during his entire life of being involved with the horse industry, he knew hundreds if not thousands of horse lovers, but only a few true "*horsemen!*" Shouldn't it be all of our goals through study, both written and observation, to become better horsemen? It's truly a life long process that each of us should embark upon to improve the quality of life for our equine companions! We should always ask ourselves: Do I know your horse as well as he (she) knows me?

"Drive By Shooting"

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Would you like to save some green?

Do you know about our client referral program?

We will send you a gift certificate for \$10 off your next bill when you refer a new client to us that makes an appointment!

"A pony is a childhood dream.

A horse is an adulthood treasure."

We' re on



Become Fan Today!

Horse Ownership

Dr. Shaarda wished to share some insightful thoughts as to why we own these magical creatures:



Horse Ownership:

To feel its warm coat with your cold hands. To become so familiar with their smell that it becomes sweet. To listen to them chew. To see yourself in the mirror of their eye. To learn their movement. To achieve what could not have been done alone.



What horses teach us: friendship, responsibility, patience, caring, to share knowledge, trust, collaboration, respect, work ethic, leadership, sportsmanship, humility, and a sense of pride.

Horses are a way of life as a: career, hobby, entertainment, social time, mentorship, family time, personal time, stress relief, and sometimes personal challenge.

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