

# The U&A Bulletin

U N I O N V I L L E E Q U I N E A S S O C I A T E S , P . C .

## Preventive Dental Care

Just as horses' hooves continuously grow and so need regular trimming, so do their teeth! Horses are designed with an upper jaw that's wider than their lower jaw, so as they chew they tend to develop sharp edges on the outside of their upper teeth and the inside of their lower teeth. These sharp edges can irritate the tongue and cheeks, even creating bleeding sores in severe cases. For this reason they should regularly be filed down or "floated." Regular dental care can provide several other benefits for your horse:

- Older horses tend to develop an uneven biting surface, with some teeth being taller and some shorter. This leads to inefficient chewing, which can contribute to weight loss and increase the risk of choke. While the wave-like biting surface can not be completely flattened out, regular care with our Power Float can minimize the unevenness and slow the development of other problems.
- Older horses may also lose some teeth; when they do, the tooth above or below the missing one will overgrow, leading to a "step" in the biting surface. This greatly interferes with proper chewing, and if not addressed can eventually result in the overgrown tooth perforating the apposing jaw.
- Horses with an overbite or underbite may develop hooks on the very front and/or back of the row of cheek teeth. Like an overgrown tooth in a step mouth, these can greatly interfere with proper chewing, and if not addressed can eventually perforate the apposing jaw.
- Sometimes the incisors grow to such a length that when they meet, the cheek teeth, which do all the grinding, are not in proper contact. In these cases the incisors can be shortened with the Power Float, restoring proper grinding by the cheek teeth.
- Young horses may have special dental needs too. Most young horses develop "wolf" teeth, small non-functional premolars that grow just in front of the first large upper cheek teeth. Wolf teeth can interfere with the proper action of the bit and are usually removed.

In addition to all the above, many people report that their horses perform better after having their teeth attended to - it seems that they feel more comfortable with the bridle.

Signs that your horse's teeth need attention include dropping a lot of food out of the mouth while chewing, chewing slowly or with the head cocked to one side, undigested bits of hay or grain visible in the manure, weight loss, frequent choke, resistance to the bit, or "quidding" (forming balls of chewed up hay or grass which may become stuck between the teeth and cheek or may be dropped out of the mouth). However, even if your horse shows none of these signs, you should have the teeth checked at least once a year. It's far better to prevent a problem than to have to treat one, and many people will testify that a more comfortable mouth leads to a happier horse.

## Important UEA Special Events

### 2nd Annual Castration Day October 7, 2008

Do you have a young colt that needs to be castrated? If so schedule an appointment for our castration day. The castration must be done at our clinic, on October 7th and must be paid for at the time of service. The discounted Castration Day fee is \$200.00 which includes sedation and a Tetanus vaccination.

### Gastroscopy Day October 23, 2008

Sign up for Gastroscopy Day on October 23rd. Back by popular demand UEA is sponsoring a second Gastroscopy Day. The procedure will be offered at half price so don't miss out on this great opportunity to diagnose if your horse has stomach ulcers.

### Dental Day November 20, 2008

Join us at UEA on November 20th for our 1st Annual Dental Day. Our veterinarians will be offering basic dental care and teeth floating at a discounted price of \$65.00.

### September is Fecal Month

All fecal exams done during the month of September will be at the discounted price of \$10.00 per exam. The specimen must be provided ten days after worming. Make sure to indicate which worming product was used when submitting sample.

Appointments must be made in advance and payment is due at the time of service. Regular prices will apply to any additional services provided.

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