February/March 2009

E-Horsebits

The HorseBits newsletter is now available via email! If you currently receive HorseBits by mail and would like to be switched to the online version of this newsletter, please contact Emily at (910) 455-5873 or emily_adams@ncsu.edu. We hope that by offering an E-newsletter we will reduce postage and printing costs to the county, as well as make it more convenient for our clients.

2009 Equine Medicine Symposium – February 21st

The Equine Medicine Symposium is the longest-running equine continuing education program at the College of Veterinary Medicine. It began when the College began! Its overall goal is to bring new horse health information to owners. The discussions are aimed so that novice owners and experienced professional trainers all have an opportunity to take home new information that they can apply to their horses. Symposium organizers try also to have some exhibitors available so attendees can learn about individual products or organizations during breaks. This year, there will be topics on wound management, updates on laminitis prevention and new diagnostics and treatments for lameness. Dr. Anthony Blikslager, the Director of the Equine Health Program, will give an overview of the research that is being done at the College to improve your horse’s health. There will be specific information about vaccinations and how you can improve bio-security and deal with actual emergency planning in your barn or on the road.

For more information, visit the website at: www.equinemedicinesymposium.com or call (919) 513-6421.

Hoof Abscesses

Imagine that your horse was perfectly sound one minute and the next minute was three-legged lame. We all know how accident prone horses can be, but what could cause your horse to be so suddenly and painfully lame? An abscess. One of those words that horse owners dread hearing.

Causing mild to severe pain for your horse, an abscess is basically an infection that is trapped within the hoof in
the sensitive tissues. This is usually caused by bacteria, that enters the hoof either by a puncture wound or a separation between the wall and sole. Debris enters the hoof and bacteria within the debris cause the inflammation.

A horse suffering from an abscess will usually have a sudden onset of severe lameness and may refuse to put weight on the affected hoof. A strong digital pulse may be detected, usually strongest on the side that the abscess is located in the hoof, and there may also be some swelling of the soft tissues around the pastern or fetlock areas of the leg. Many times, this infection will search out a path of least resistance and will travel up the hoof wall, eventually exiting around the coronary band. After this occurs, the abscess will begin to drain and the horse’s pain will generally lessen. Your vet can also identify where the abscess is located through the use of hoof testers and then pare the area of the sole closest to the abscess to help speed drainage. The abscess can then be flushed and later packed to promote healing. Sometimes if the abscess is particularly stubborn, the use of a drawing agent (like Epsom salts) or a poultice bandage will be needed to help draw it to the surface.

Always consult your vet for advice before beginning any treatment program if you suspect that your horse may have an abscess.

### Upcoming Extension Horse Husbandry Courses

For more information about these courses, call the Extension office or visit the Extension Horse Husbandry website at http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/an_sci/extension/horse/Webpages/NCSU_EHH_Home.htm

**February 26** – NCSU Horse Facility Short Course – Hampton Inn and Suites, Raleigh

**February 27** – NCSU Business Management for Horse Farm Operators Short Course – Hampton Inn and Suites, Raleigh

**February 27-March 1** – VA/NC Volunteer Leaders Conference – W.E. Skelton 4-H Center, Wirtz, VA

**March 2** – Introduction to Animal Cruelty Law – Contact Equine Education Alliance (in cooperation with Wake Tech Community College, Raleigh

**March 3-5** – Equine Investigators Short Course – In cooperation with Wake Tech Community College, Hampton Inn and Suites and Equine Educational Unit, Raleigh

**March 13-14** – NCSU Equine Hoof Care and Shoeing Short Course – Hampton Inn and Suites, Equine Educational Unit, Raleigh (Sponsored by Zin Pro and the NC Horse Shoers’ Association).

### Calling All Horse Enthusiasts!
**REINS Wants YOU!**

Note: The 2009 REINS training for new volunteers is scheduled for February 20-21 and March 20-21 in Raleigh! The deadline to turn in your registration is February 13, 2007.

The Regional Equine Information Network System or ‘REINS’ is a program created by North Carolina Cooperative Extension and North Carolina State University to help provide educational resources to our state’s booming horse industry. REINS volunteers can provide you with accurate, research based information on various topics related to horse management. And best of all…. the information is FREE!

Here are some common questions we receive about the REINS program:

**How does REINS help our horse industry?**

The horse industry in North Carolina has grown rapidly in recent years.
Many horse owners are “hungry” for accurate information on how to best care for and manage their horses. It is not uncommon to find horse owners who don’t fully understand the health or nutritional needs of their horse. They may receive conflicting or inaccurate advice on feeding and care from well-meaning (yet uninformed) individuals. In a worst case scenario, the county’s Animal Control or a rescue agency may have to intervene on the horse’s behalf. REINS volunteers can help reach horse owners to ensure that they have the accurate information that they need to fully care for their horses, whether they’re new horse owners or have been a horse owner for quite some time.

A strong and prosperous horse industry starts with healthy and happy horses. **What do REINS volunteers do?**

Activities do vary among the different REINS regions but all of us have the same goal… to educate horse owners! REINS volunteers might make farm visits to help fellow horse owners solve problems they may be having. They can provide research-based information on a one-on-one basis and help make recommendations on topics such as pasture management, facility design, or nutrition. Volunteers also work with each other and with Extension Agents within their region to put together meetings to help educate horse owners in a group environment. They may also help to organize barn tours, trail rides, horse festivals, and clinics in their areas. There is no end to what REINS volunteers can do to help their fellow horse enthusiasts!

**Who are my local REINS volunteers?**

REINS volunteers are located all across the state of North Carolina. The easiest way to find a volunteer close to you is to contact the Cooperative Extension office in your county. They can provide you with information to help you get in contact with a volunteer in your area.

**There isn’t an Extension Agent in my county who has horse responsibilities. Who else can I contact to find out horse related information?**

There may not be an Agent housed in your county who has livestock or horse responsibilities if you live in a more urban county or if the county-wide needs assessment doesn’t show that there is enough demand for a position of that nature. This is where REINS volunteers can help. These individuals can help to answer any horse related questions you may have or they can help you get in contact with a REINS volunteer close to you who will be glad to assist you.

**I’d like to become a REINS volunteer. How do I do this?**

Contact your local Extension agent or the REINS Regional Coordinator in your area to get a new volunteer application. You’ll be required to attend a total of 4 days of training offered by Extension Agents and Specialists at North Carolina State University. There is a fee to attend the training but it covers some of your meals and also all of the training manuals you’ll receive. To complete your certification after the training, you’ll need to pass a multiple choice, open book exam and attend 6 additional hours of training on your own. This can be done by attending any clinics, field days, or educational meetings that may be available in your area and are approved by State and Regional REINS coordinators. Volunteers are expected to give back to the REINS program and their horse community by volunteering their time to educate others.

For more information on the REINS program, contact your local Cooperative Extension office or email Emily Adams Walton, Regional REINS Coordinator, at emily_adams@ncsu.edu.
Calendar of Events:

February

6th – Southern National Draft Horse Pull – Hunt Horse Complex, Raleigh

9th – Horse Shoeing Winter Seminar – State Fairgrounds, Raleigh (Call 800-529-9206 or visit nchorsecouncil.com for more info)

14th – Southeast District 4-H Horse Bowl – Onslow Extension Center

21st – Equine Medicine Symposium – College of Veterinary Medicine, Raleigh

28th – Raleigh Spring Horse Sale – Hunt Horse Complex, Raleigh

March

7-8th – Eastern Hunter Association – Bob Martin Ag Center, Williamston

If you have an event that you’d like to post on our April/May calendar events, contact Emily at (910) 455-5873 or emily_adams@ncsu.edu by March 15.

Thanks,

Emily Adams Walton
Extension Agent, Livestock

SPOTLIGHT

February is American Heart Month

By Robin Seitz

Cardiovascular diseases, including stroke, are our nation’s No. 1 killer. A healthy diet and lifestyle are the best weapons you have to fight heart disease. It is important to remember that it is the overall pattern of the choices you make that counts. As you make daily food choices, base your eating pattern on these recommendations.

- Choose lean meats and poultry without skin and prepare them without added saturated and trans fat.
- Select fat-free, 1% fat, and low-fat dairy products.
- Cut back on foods containing partially hydrogenated vegetable oils to reduce trans fat in your diet.
- Cut back on foods high in dietary cholesterol. Aim to eat less than 300 mg of cholesterol each day.
- Cut back on beverages and foods with added sugars.
- Choose and prepare foods with little or no salt. Aim to eat less than 2,300 mg of sodium daily (less than 1,500 mg if you are in a high risk group for high blood pressure).
- If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation (no more than one drink per day if you're a woman and two drinks per day if you're a man).

Choosing to add physical activity to your daily life is another important step to preventing heart disease. Current guidelines for adults suggest doing a minimum of 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, or 1 hour and 15 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or combinations of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity. To determine your activity level, try the talk test. If you are able to carry on a conversation comfortably while still exercising, you are exercising at a moderate intensity. If you cannot carry on a conversation comfortably, you are exercising at a vigorous intensity. Aerobic activity should be performed in episodes of at least 10 minutes, and preferably spread throughout the week.

For more information about keeping your heart healthy contact Robin Seitz, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent at 910-455-5873 or robin_seitz@ncsu.edu