



# Horse Bits

Horse Industry Newsletter-March/April, 2009



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## Texas HORSE –“Horse Organizations for Racing, Showing and Eventing”

For the first time ever, horse organizations representing all areas of the horse industry have put their differences aside and have banded together in unprecedented fashion to work on important issues. A realization that the Horse Industry in Texas is economically important and that we may be losing some of our horses and horse enterprises to other states, has triggered a response from horse people across the state. Several conferences and meetings have already been held to discuss racing, showing and eventing issues which are important to enthusiasts across the great State of Texas. Visit [www.texashorseweb.com](http://www.texashorseweb.com) to learn more about this group and their efforts.

### Research in Equine Gastric Ulcer Syndrome

Recent research conducted by graduate students and Dr.'s Sigler and Gibbs in the Department of Animal Science along with Dr. Cohen in the College of Veterinary Medicine has shown that compared to grass hay, feeding alfalfa hay reduces the severity of Equine Gastric Ulcer Syndrome (EGUS) in yearlings.

EGUS has been reported to occur in 57% of foals, 60% of performance horses and over 90% of all race horses. EGUS is associated with numerous health-related issues including colic, sour attitude and poor performance. Many of the management systems imposed on domesticated horses have been reported to be contributing factors leading to EGUS, including stall confinement, high concentrate feeding, feed deprivation, transportation, and intense exercise.

Feeding alfalfa hay at about 1% of body weight for 28 days significantly reduced the ulcer severity score in exercised yearlings as compared to those fed grass hay. Horses also were fed a pelleted concentrate at 1% body weight.

In a subsequent study, initial endoscopic examination showed 17 out of 22 yearlings had a grade 2 or greater (on a scale of 0 to 4) ulcer severity score before any treatment was initiated. As observed in the previous study, after feeding alfalfa hay for 28 days, there was a significant reduction in ulcer severity scores. These preliminary studies suggest that the severity of EGUS in yearling horses can be effectively reduced by diet manipulation.

Researchers are not recommending that horse owners stop feeding coastal hay. Research is continuing to try to determine how much alfalfa must be fed and in what forms. Future projects will focus on trying to discover the mechanism for the favorable responses of feeding alfalfa hay, including evaluating the effect of mineral levels and other nutrients on reducing the severity of EGUS.

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### 2009 Texas A&M University Horse Short Course

Horse owners and enthusiasts should put May 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> on their calendar. An exciting program is planned, featuring demonstrations on “Building the Foundation for a Successful Training Program”, presented by Craig Cameron and “Advanced Training of Rope and Ranch Horses”, presented by Tyler Magnus. The Horse Short Course will be held at the N.W. Dick Freeman Arena and the Kleberg Animal & Food Science Center on the campus of Texas A&M University

Information also will be presented on Selection and Care of Tack, Conformation and Selection of Performance Horses, Pasture Management, Techniques for Improving Equine Performance, Environmental Issues Facing Horse Owners, and Pre-Purchase Exams.

Program begins at 6:00 p.m., Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup> at the N.W. Dick Freeman Arena in College Station, TX. Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, begins at 8:30 a.m. in the Kleberg Animal & Food Science Center and will conclude at N.W. Dick Freeman Arena. Registration fee is \$50.00/person prior to April 24, 2009. Late registrations will be accepted after April 24, at a cost of \$60.00/person. Registration fee includes lunch and handout material.

This program is sponsored in part by Land O'Lakes Purina Feed. For registration information, go to <http://agrilifevents.tamu.edu>. For registration questions, please call Valerie - 979.845.2604. For all other inquiries, please contact Kristi - 979.845.1562.

## TAMU Equine Reproduction Management Short Course a Big Success!

Equine Reproduction Management Short Courses held December 3-5 and January 14-16 attracted a total of 23 breeders, horse owners and farm managers from as far away as Ohio, California and Mexico. Attendees were given three days of intense lectures and hands-on demonstrations by Animal Science faculty, staff and graduate students on everything from basic reproductive physiology of the mare and stallion, feeding and management, to collecting, handling and processing of semen. These programs are traditionally held every December and January and are open to anyone who has an interest in learning more about managing mares and stallions. For information about future schools, contact Dr. Martha Vogelsang (m-vogelsang@tamu.edu), 979-845-7731.

## TAMU Stock Horse Team Excels in Fall Contests

The Texas A&M Stock Horse Team competed at two Intercollegiate Stock Horse Shows in Bryan and Stephenville and were named Champion Team Overall at both shows. The team, coached by Dr. Dennis Sigler competes under American Stock Horse Association (ASHA) rules. Showing against other colleges and universities in ASHA classes including stock horse pleasure, reining, trail and cowhorse. Fall, 2008 team members were:

Michaelle Blake, Kate Lassig, Sally Long, Morgan Simmons, Kathleen Sullivan, Megan Tracy, Amber Vincent, Leah Ward and Michelle Wilkens.



This is a very educational and rewarding experience for college students, but there is very little university support for this activity. If you are interested in finding out more about providing support for this program, please contact Dr. Dennis Sigler.

## Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM) Outbreak

By now most horse breeders are aware of the CEM outbreak. One stallion in Texas, which previously stood in Kentucky, has been positively diagnosed with CEM.

Nationwide, the CEM investigation now involves at least 512 horses in 45 states, according to the USDA. The outbreak began in mid-December, when a Quarter Horse stallion on a Kentucky farm tested positive during routine testing for international semen shipment.

CEM is a contagious bacterial infection that passes between mares and stallions during mating. It can also be transmitted on contaminated insemination equipment. Stallions do not suffer any clinical signs, but the infection causes inflammation in the mare's uterine lining. This can prevent pregnancy or cause the mare to abort if she becomes pregnant. The disease is treatable with disinfectants and antibiotics.

CEM is considered a foreign animal disease in the United States. It was first discovered in Europe in 1977, and has appeared in the United States only twice outside quarantine stations where stallions are required to be tested and treated before being released into the country. There was an outbreak in 1979. In 2006, three Lipizzaner stallions imported into Wisconsin from Eastern Europe tested positive after their arrival, but before they had been used for breeding. Updates and additional information can be found on the USDA website (<http://www.aphis.usda.gov>).

## Stallions Standing at the TAMU Department of Animal Science Horse Center

Texas A&M University currently stands several top performance-bred stallions to the public. Young horses sired by many of these stallions are used in training classes and also are available for purchase by the public. For information, go to (<http://animalscience.tamu.edu/academics/equine/horse-center/index.htm>) or contact Mr. Dave Golden, 979-845-4320 or 979-777-1718. All sales of horses and breeding fees directly support Horse Teaching and Research Programs at Texas A&M University.

**Bobby Sox Playboy.** Sorrel, AQHA Champion, AQHA High Point All-Around Champion Stallion and GMC Truck Award Winner, AQHA High Point Team Roping Heeling Champion, AQHA Open Superior Awards in Heading, Heeling, Calf Roping, earner of 745 AQHA Points in heading, heeling, calf roping, working cowhorse, reining and halter. Owned by Covert Ranch.

**Sonnys Blondy Dude.** Gray, AQHA Superior Awards in Calf Roping, Heading and Heeling, AQHA High-Point Calf Roping Champion, 441 AQHA points. Owned by Covert Ranch.

**Two Eyed Red Barron.** Sorrel, son of Mr Baron Red out of a daughter of Two Eyed Jack. This stallion has 4 white socks and puts lots of chrome on his babies! AQHA Superior Awards in Heading, Heeling and Calf Roping, ROM Halter, 547 AQHA Points. Owned by Covert Ranch.

**Chicoutmyblingbling.** Bay, son of Smart Chic Olena, out of a daughter of Shining Spark. Very attractive, athletic. First year to stand to the public. Owned by Clinton Anderson.

**TAMU Peppy Rey Jay.** Chestnut by Pop A Top Pep out of an own daughter of the great Rey Jay. Bred and born at Texas A&M University. Successfully shown in Stock Horse of Texas Competitions. Offspring are very athletic and cowy. Owned by TAMU.

**Dundee Colonel.** Buckskin, Colonel Freckles and Big Step breeding. Has been shown in reining and stock horse competition. Siring lots of color, good minds and athleticism. Owned by TAMU.

**For more information contact:  
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