Proceedings of the 10th International Congress of World Equine Veterinary Association

Jan. 28 – Feb. 1, 2008 - Moscow, Russia

Next Congress:

WEVA 2009 Congress
Guanujá-SP, Brazil, September 24-27, 2009

Reprinted in IVIS with the permission of the Conference Organizers http://www.ivis.org/
COLICS
PREVENTING EQUINE COLIC: PUTTING THE SCIENCE INTO PRACTICE
Christopher Proudman
University of Liverpool Veterinary School, UK

Over the past 20 years scientists have made considerable progress towards understanding the causes of equine colic. For many colic types we now recognise “risk factors,” things that make colic more or less likely to occur in a particular horse. This presentation will review risk factors for colic in general and for specific types of colic. It will identify risk factors that can be modified thereby decreasing the risk of a horse suffering from colic.

The following practical advice arises from the consideration of modifiable risk factors for colic:

- **Be aware of the parasite status of horses and use appropriate control measures.** Intestinal parasites are associated with a number of different types of colic. Every episode of parasite-associated colic is potentially preventable so a good worm control programme will reduce the risk of colic.
- **Minimise any changes in diet.** Don’t make unnecessary changes to a horse’s diet. Try to standardise diet even when the horse is away from home e.g. racing. Every change in diet will increase the risk of a number of types of colic for a period of 7-14 days.
- **Make any changes slowly, over a long period of time.** Changes in the forage:concentrate ratio of a diet should be made progressively over a period of 2-3 weeks. This will allow the horse’s intestine time to adapt to the altered diet. Be aware of the dietary changes that occur when you change your horse’s management (e.g. turnout at the end of the racing season) and make such changes gradually.
- **Advise against buying horses with a history of colic.** Some horses are predisposed to colic. Potential purchasers should be aware of the increased risk.