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Fall & Winter Warning!

The Odds of a Colic Incident Rise as Temperatures Fall

Increased Feeding of Grain Concentrates Is Often the Cause; Top Dressing ReStore™ 24/7 Offers Safe Alternative

In winter, most veterinarians spend a disproportionate amount of their time treating colic. Knowing why this is so can make your life and that of your veterinarian a lot less hectic.

45 Degrees a Critical Temperature

Horses are most comfortable at temperatures above 45 degrees. When temperatures drop below 45 degrees, the horse is forced to use significant amounts of energy to help maintain body temperature.

The horse has two options to produce this needed energy: First, internally, from stores of body fat and muscle; and, second, externally, from energy provided in the diet — and more importantly — from heat generated by the bacterial digestion of forage.

Option one, using body stores, is really not an option. It soon becomes life threatening, especially in older horses.

The only acceptable way to manage the energy problem is option two: dietary management.

Calculating Energy Needs

We can calculate how much extra energy is needed per day by subtracting the actual temperature, including the wind chill adjustment, from the 45-degree critical temperature.

For example, let's say today's temperature with the wind chill is 19 degrees. Subtract this from the equine critical temperature of 45 degrees and you have 26 degrees. Convert this figure to extra energy measured as calories needed by your horse. Under these conditions your horse needs 26% more energy.

Now, in this situation the natural inclination is to feed more grain or sweet feed since they provide more calories per pound than hay. But with this approach, although we may have met our calculated calorie needs with grain, we fail to generate that all important body heat generated by the bacteria of the large intestine. To do this we need to feed hay.

Recommendations

The increased feeding of grain in cold weather is a primary reason for increased incidences of colic.

Our experience has shown the safest way to keep your horse comfortable through the winter is to increase *equally* the amounts of hay and grain fed, and to top dress ReStore™ 24/7.

ReStore-Rx™ w/Senleptin™ and ReStore™ 24/7

We recommend top dressing ReStore™ products. Controlled studies have shown that when ReStore™ is added to the diet of growing and mature horses, improvements in bacterial populations in the hindgut occur. This positively impacts fermentation efficiency and nutrient utilization and results in a reduction digestive upsets ? especially colic.

Water and Colic

Horses prefer water that is between 45 degrees to 65 degrees. As water temperature drops, water consumption decreases — another key factor in causing colic.

We have found that the combination of adequate amounts of hay fed in conjunction with ReStore™ 24/7 will encourage your horse to drink more.

Summary

Understanding how equine critical temperature affects dietary management is the first step to help you prevent a dangerous and costly episode of colic.