



The PERFECT HOOF

Club Newsletter

Official Newsletter Of Performance Hoof Care

FOR THE HEALTH OF HORSES --- FEED OATS! BUT THAT IS NOT ALL! BY DAN MOORE, DVM

Has anyone ever been told to NOT feed oats? And if so, has the same person ever offered any reason other than the oats are carbs and may make your horse "hot?" Probably not! So let me preface this article by saying that personally, I have suggested oats to thousands upon thousands of horse owners (as have many other nutrition minded educators) and not once can I remember those to whom I suggested such, not loving the results. **Oats work - despite the rumors!** But let's look closer at why and also look at why other feeds may NOT be so great. And especially let's take a close look at why these commercial feeds may actually be directly related and in my opinion the very cause of many of our overweight, cresty-necked, insulin resistant, allergy and laminitic prone horses today. In addition, at why the idea of supplementing either commercial or individual grains, oats or otherwise, with vitamins, minerals, microbials and such is critical as well.

So what IS bad about oats? Oats like ALL grains are mineral and vitamin deficient. Horses simply can't get the overall nutrition that they need from a grain UNLESS they are fortified. Oats, corn, barley, etc., etc. are all deficient. What all farmers essentially use today to fertilize with is chemical fertilizer. The 10-10-10's or 20-10-10's or whatever are only nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus. 10% nitrogen, 10% phosphorous, 10% potassium. What happened to all the other minerals on the periodic chart we learned about in high school? To make matters even worse, these fertilizers are salt based. Salt destroys the soil over time and makes it very packed, clay and sticky - AND in doing so, kills the earth worms, the soils true method for oxygenation. BUT fertilizer sure does make the grass

and crops grow, doesn't it? Have you ever thought about how salt attracts water? Alright, now we have nice lush grass and crops or grain full of fertilizer and water. Doesn't that sound nutritious? On the positive side, it does weigh more, looks great, and brings more dollars for the farmer despite its lack of nutrition. I don't mean to be critical, but I assure you the ones who are really profiting here are the petrochemical companies selling this junk (not to even mention the pesticides and herbicides being sold as well, because the ground is so sick) and the Pharmaceutical companies selling the drugs because we AND OUR HORSES are so sick from eating it too. With the cost of such expensive farming, it is truly a wonder ANY farms are still in business. Since I don't work for a major university who teach such farming practices, and oh by the way, get a lot of money from such megalopolies, I guess I just spilled the beans! Praise the Lord for the up and coming organic farmers - they deserve your dollar!

Ok, so we next need to get rid of the hot horse, high carb myth. Now don't get me wrong, oats are carbs! BUT compared to corn which is IDENTICAL to sugar, which is worse? I know you have heard of the glycemc index by now - if you haven't yet, it is all over TV. Sugar has a glycemc index of 100 - corn has the same. That is, a cup of corn will have the same effect on the body as a cup of sugar. Now that sounds healthy doesn't it? VERY few, if any commercial feeds that I am aware of, are corn free, and most contain lots of corn at that. Continued page 2

PHC Highlights

Welcome to this month's issue of the Perfect Hoof Club newsletter. The club forum has been very active with new members joining daily. The number of topics is increasing, as are the number of posts. Membership in the Perfect Hoof Club has grown at an incredible rate since the first of the year, with hundreds showing interest in performance hoof care. If you have not joined the forum, please do so. Even if you choose not to post, there is a lot of good information shared by Horse Owners, Applied Equine Podiatrists, and Veterinarians. Our DAEPs have been working to oversee the forum, and have done a great job of keeping it free of politics and misleading information. Some may view this as censorship; we view it as taking responsibility.

This months specials:

Take an additional \$25.00 off the Institute's First Level On-Line program! That is a total of \$75.00 off!

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FOR THE HEALTH OF HORSES --- FEED OATS! BUT THAT IS NOT ALL! CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Now granted, corn has gone up in price lately because of the alcohol gas that is being made from it so more than likely, you will find corn being used less now than before. BUT what you will probably find too is that more molasses and other sweetener type additives will be used to cover up the other worse tasting grains or whatever that will be substituted. Just so you also fully understand – molasses IS SUGAR. Sugar (molasses) like corn is bad too... They cause the insulin spikes, subsequent insulin resistance from over production by the body, hypothyroid, cushings horses etc.. Sugar highs (hyperglycemia) and sugar lows (hypoglycemia) are the culprits health wise. Feeding corn and sugar at the morning meal is like us eating donuts and candy for breakfast. The high sugar wears the pancreas out that produces the insulin to handle the sugar and the later in the day the sugar low causes tremendous stress on the body because the body is starving to death. This hypoglycemia wears the adrenals (glands that handle stress) out and eventually hypothyroidism, cushings (from over production of adrenal glands), and sometimes laminitis and metabolic issues of all types can result. Heck, the body is just flat out worn out from working too hard just from trying to handle the ups and down of just living. The reserves get worn out just from living itself, and sometimes even the slightest stress can cause havoc. And while we are speaking of commercial feeds, let me just mention the use of pellets. I don't know of any horse in the wild that eats anything cooked – do you? Enough said, except that pellets can hide ANYTHING too. **At least with oats, you know what you are getting.** So what is the answer to feeding today? The choices are countless. It is so easy to be swayed by feeds that talk about low carbs, senior feeds and even such things as beet pulp. But I keep going back to oats! All commercial feeds are produced to “hit the middle of the road” when it comes to the vitamin and mineral fortification. For instance, a typical formulation might provide the correct nutrition for a 1,000 lb horse that say eats 10 lbs of the feed each day. That is about 1% of the body

weight.... So if the horse ate 10 lbs that day he would get “everything” he needed. Does every “typical average” 1,000 horse in your barn eat 10 lbs each day. If they all did, chances are that you would have some horses that looked like the Goodyear Blimp and some that were as skinny as a rail! They all need different amounts of grain – they all have different metabolisms.... just like us. What about that easy keeper horse that only eats 5 lbs, is he not getting only ½ of what he needs of the “extra fortification” ? How about the horse that needs more? Is he not getting too much?

Let's take this just a little further about the easy keeper, cresty-necked, overweight horse since such is one of the biggest problems I see today. If your horse fits the above description, what would be the first thing you would do? Most likely you would give him less feed, right? But if you cut back, would he not be getting less of the “added” vitamins, minerals etc? Chances are he was already the easy keeper 5 pound horse and now you cut it back more! Definitely the right thinking, but definitely missing the very important point that he needs the vitamins and minerals regardless of how much grain he eats! If you feed less of such “premixed,” he gets less of the very nutrients that he really needs to regulate his metabolism in the first place. Such deficiencies eventually lead to hypothyroidism, laminitis prone, metabolic, cushings type situations.

The point is that regardless of the amount of grain you feed – you must supplement the vitamins and minerals if you have an easy keeper, otherwise you will have an even sicker, easy keeper! And certainly hard keepers get out of balance too from getting to much. Once again, I suggest oats to handle the problem, regardless of carbs, because oats are easiest to balance – Just add a vitamin mineral supplement to whatever amount of oats that horse needs to maintain HIS proper weight. If you are already feeding commercial grain, just gradually switch to oats over a week or so. After he has been on that same

volume for awhile, you can give more oats or less depending on the horse's personal weight needs. Each day just add the vitamin, mineral supplement as a top dressing at each feeding. That way, you know he is getting the correct amount of both oats and supplement. I know it sounds elementary, but it is critical especially for easy keepers. By the way, clean, whole oats are fine. Crimped are only about 6% more efficient anyway, and once the hull is cracked, they start going rancid. Flax seed is also very likely to go rancid. One of the reasons I generally don't suggest flax – it goes rancid way too easy, especially the way we have to buy in bulk for our horses.

I had a person tell me the other day that horses were not likely to get oats in the wild? I wanted to say “Lady, here is your sign” but I didn't! I reminded her that horses sure were not going to get corn, sugar, or cooked pellets in the wild, and those seed heads such as oats were about as close to whatever they could get in the wild. Oats are the seed off of about the closest thing to grass I know! I do believe horses were made to eat grass - right? I am amazed at all the info out there on grass and easy keepers. Only let them eat 1 hour here and one hour there, and only at night and not day, and soak your hay to get the sugars out and on and on and on and on.

Can you imagine abiding by such recommendations? It is just not feasible – especially with the 30 or so horses we have – and they are all easy keeper, mountain horse type horses. Oats, added supplements (vitamins, minerals and GOOD FAT), decent hay (or the grass in summer) and FREE CHOICE NATURAL SALT AND MINERALS – (see the article on laminitis) will answer your problems and prevent problems. I am telling you that thousands upon thousands of horses can't be wrong! Now before I close, I want to discuss one more very important supplement that is needed – GOOD FAT!

FOR THE HEALTH OF HORSES --- FEED OATS! BUT THAT IS NOT ALL! CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Now I know I am picking on commercial feeds here, but in my humble opinion, they need it - pretty much all commercial feeds contain JUNK FAT! AND this is probably the biggest reason we have so many overweight, insulin resistant horses today. Junk fat is in our horse feed just like it is in our food! AND JUNK FAT IS KILLING US AND OUR HORSES! Processed, hydrogenated vegetable oils (flax, corn, etc.) are destroying our cells internally and even messing with our nervous systems - nerves and cells are all surrounded by fat membranes. It has the effect of making all such membranes like plastic balls. Today, diets are higher in fat than they were in years past, especially senior feeds and "low carbs" type diets, BUT THE PROBLEM is the type of fat they are using is awful. If the feed says only vegetable oil or doesn't say that it is NOT HYDROGENATED, chances are it is - and is awful for our horse. The same goes for your food, especially snacks - read the labels and avoid them. BUT horses do need fat. It can be a great source of omega fatty acids (they need omega3, 6 and 9 by the way not just 3) and fats "slow" the absorption of any grain, oats or otherwise - making the digestion process slower. I believe that this is one of the very reasons we have had such good luck with oats - fats do slow the digestion, and obviously would help lubricate the gut as well (great for sandy conditions especially). BUT they especially are great because they nourish the cells. I prefer to use crude, cold pressed, NON hydrogenated,

NON refined soybean oil. We even have a GMO free version now too. Have you ever heard the expression that "the only way to burn fat is with fat" - well I do believe it is true, because these fat horses (and people) do get better when the good fat is used to displace the bad. I have no doubt that the cells overall just start to function better because the membrane's major function is to allow the good stuff to get in and the junk to get out. I suggest good fats for all horses as both a preventive and a treatment. Yes, too much can make a fat horse but a couple ounces per day of good crude, unrefined, non hydrogenated soybean oil can make all the difference in the health of a horse. You can actually see the difference in just a few weeks. I also think that any metabolic, even EPM, neurodegenerative horses require lots of good oil. I have a sneaky suspicion that many "super bugs" such as those that cause EPM get trapped in fats cells and good fats can flush them out so to speak.

Regardless, they are healthy - commercially used fats are generally not! By the way, I have had many people ask about beet pulp over the last few years. Beets have essentially no nutritional value except fiber. Why pay for "extra fiber" when hay and or grass would do the same? Also beet pulp is a bi-product of the beet industry, and a lot of pesticides are used on beets. Roots do tend to accumulate more pesticides than plants, just food for thought!

Ok! So I think by now you can see I like oats and not commercial feeds. BUT do remember that oats alone are not balanced anymore than commercial feeds are - it is just that they are easier to balance, more nutritious, and as close to the "wild" as I have been able to find. They must be supplemented with fat (unprocessed oil) and vitamins and minerals and free choice natural salt and minerals should be available at all times. If you don't add the supplements, they won't provide what is needed either - this is especially so in young horses because they can really get out of balance. BUT the carb issue is just not an issue if you supplement them! I suggest this approach for essentially all horses instead of commercial feeds. Such customization is really rather easy. Give the horse whatever amount of oats he needs, add the supplement, add the oil, and check the free choice salt and mineral bucket to make sure it is available, and you have a healthy horse. I do suggest you check out our website on the types of salt and minerals that are best.

Dan Moore, DVM

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A FROGS TALE

For the past several years, I have asked if anyone knew why the frog was called the frog.

Here are some of the answers I received.

This from **Terry Peters-Boswell**, one of our dedicated full time students.

She writes:

One of the crucial part of a plow that serves to connect and control is triangular and called a frog.

There is a part on the bow of a stringed instrument that is called a frog. It is where the hair is held in place, serves to control the tension on the hair and "gives purchase or grip" for the player.

There is a triangular piece on part of a railroad track called a frog and controls how and where a train switches tracks.

Frogs look kind of like the frog of the horse - *triangular and squishy and they 'hop'*

The Germans use a word that sounds like frog but means ray or fork. (see "train reference")

Frogs are things that hold sides of a garment together.

Frogs are loops on a belt which hold swords or other weapons.

Frogs are also pieces used in floral arrangements that hold flowers in place.

Frogs (of bows) are held in a special vice, called oddly enough, a **frock**, where they are shaped and tooled.

Debbie Survila, DAEP sends us this interpretation of how the frog may have gotten its name.

In the 1800's in Scotland, there was a club called the Society of the Horseman's Word. Horse trainers, blacksmiths, and other horseman would join to learn horsemanship skills. Elder members of this masonic-like society were reputed to have supernatural abilities to understand and control horses.

Apparently this Scottish club was only one of several such societies during this time (for horsemen and people with other interests). Supposedly the society passed down from horseman to horseman a secret word or phrase that would control horses... a word that, when spoken to a horse, would instantly make him follow every command or wish. There was a demand for those that knew the Word. Such an individual could make a wild horse calm and manageable, or a stubborn horse agreeable. These "horse whisperers" as they were called practiced both horsemanship and witchcraft. Initiation ceremonies included reading passages from the Bible backwards in order to summon the devil. Passwords, handshakes, and salutes were used to keep their rituals and practices secret.

They carried talismans and charms for good luck, and used oils and scents to influence horses. They would use a strong scent to 'jade' a horse, or make it refuse to move. Other oils and herbs would do the opposite, and restore the horse back to normal or have a calming influence on the horse. For this reason, they were also called 'horse-witches'. One of the most important charms that they carried was a bone of a frog or toad. Part of the initiation ceremony required novices to kill a toad, and leave it on a whitethorn bush for 24 hours to dry. Then, the toad was put in an anthill and left for a month, so the ants would eat everything off but the bones. It was removed from the anthill and tossed into a running stream during a full moon. The horseman would watch the bones come apart in the water until the pelvis bone floated free (it's said to

have floated upstream against the current). This bone is very similar in shape to the horse's frog. It was kept by the horseman and supposedly used to bewitch or control horses.

This, then, could be the reason that part of the horse's hoof is named after a frog; this almost forgotten society with its bizarre rituals is the only link I can find that relates the two.

The Society of the Horseman's Word was at its peak in 1870's and lasted up until the 1930's. The Society may still exist in remote parts of Scotland.

Here's my two cents worth:

I found the suggestion that the word derives from the Italian or French word for the same anatomical part, *forchetta* and *furchette*, respectively. Well, what do those words mean, etymologically? They mean "little fork," suggesting that the *frog* was seen to resemble a fork in shape. We can certainly see the fork shape. Remember that early forks had only two tines. This makes *frog* (in this sense only) cognate with English *fork*. It dates from the early 17th century in English. *Frog* may also simply be a version of *fork* that underwent metathesis (the r and the o changed places) rather than being a derivative of the French or Italian word.



THE PERFECT HOOF *Sport Highlights*

POLO BY JUNE SCOTT

History

The first recorded polo match took place in 600 BC, making this the world's oldest ball game. The game was played for the first time in the UK on Hounslow Heath in 1869 and in Argentina in 1875 – Argentina has enjoyed unchallenged supremacy in the world of polo in recent years. Polo was featured in the Olympics from 1900 until 1939.

The Game

Polo can only be played right handed. Opposing players are allowed to meet the ball on their stick side so if one player was playing left handed and the other playing right handed, they would have a head on collision! The reins are held in the left hand and the mallet in the right hand. Professional players can be moving at up to 38 miles per hour, and this is a full contact sport. Polo is unique in that amateurs and professional compete alongside each other in all but international or a handful of all-pro fixtures. Men and women also compete on equal terms.

Season

In the Northern hemisphere, competitive grass polo is played from April until the end of September. Arena polo is played throughout the winter months, but reduced numbers of players participate. Many professional players also 'follow the sun' and play grass polo in the southern hemisphere from October until March.

Equipment

Players wear helmets of different design to normal riding hats, and some also wear protective faceguards. White jeans are worn with brown leather boots, kneepads and gloves. Players use mallets or sticks just over 4 feet in length, with mallet heads of around 9 x 2 inches in size. Sticks are measured in inches while the head weight is measured in grams! Polo balls are 3½ inches in diameter and made of hard plastic. Polo saddles are flat and close-contact, to enable the player to be highly mobile. Bridles carry four reins, and are of stronger leather than normal. Ponies wear



standing martingales that are sufficiently loose so as not to impede movement but sufficiently tight that the pony's head doesn't hit the player in the face when they lean forward to take a shot.

The Pitch

The outdoor polo field is 300 yards long by 220 wide, making it the largest field in organized sport. Goal posts at each end are 24 feet apart and a minimum 10 foot in height. Penalty lines are marked at 30 yards from the goal, 40 yards, 60 yards, and at mid-field.

Chukkas

A match is split into periods of play or chukkas of 7 minutes in length. The clock is stopped if a foul is blown. A bell is sounded at the end of 7 minutes and play continues for another 30 seconds or until the ball goes out of play or a foul is called. In the final chukka, there is no additional 30 seconds of play unless the score is drawn. If the score is still equal at the end of 30 seconds, a sudden death chukka may be played with the first team to score being declared the winner. Should no team score in this chukka, the goal posts are widened and another chukka is played.

Matches comprise 4, 5 or 6 chukkas, depending on the level of play. The best players play matches of 6 chukkas; whereas at the lower end of the game, matches are played over 4 chukkas.

An interval of three minutes is given between each chukka allowing players to change ponies. At half-time, this interval is extended to five minutes and spectators are invited onto the pitch to tread in the divots. Because they are used to rapid changeovers, many polo ponies stop when the rider kicks their feet out of the stirrups and move off into canter the instant the rider is on board!

Players

A polo team is made up of four players. Numbers 1 and 2 are attackers, Number 3 is normally the Captain's position and he or she is known as the 'pivot' or 'playmaker.' Number 4 is the back or defender. There is no goal keeper. Arena polo is played in winter with 2 or 3 players on each side, depending on the size of the arena. The arena ball is air filled and is like a mini soccer ball, and bounces off the arena walls.

Handicap

A polo player is rated from 'S' for starter going to 2 when they know the rules and can hit the ball reasonably consistently, up to 10 goals, with the latter handicap being applied to the world's greatest. Handicaps do not refer to the number of goals usually scored by an individual, but to their perceived value to the team. The team handicap is calculated as the sum of each of the players' handicaps. The difference in handicap between playing teams is established and can result in one team beginning a match with a handicap goal advantage.

SHOELESS POLO CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Level of Play

High-goal tournaments and matches are between teams with handicaps of 17-22 goals; medium-goal upper limit of 15; intermediate upper limit of 12; and low goal limits of 0-4, 0-6 or 4-8. Open tournaments are played with no handicap limits. The highest handicapped team possible is 40 goals. Since there are only around a dozen players in the world with a 10 goal handicap, matches between two 40 goal teams are rare.

Umpires

A match is 'policed' by two mounted umpires. The Referee or Third Man watches from the sidelines and will be called upon to arbitrate if the two umpires find they cannot agree.

Rules

The rules of polo are mainly concerned with ensuring horse and rider safety, in that order! The most fundamental rules are based around the Line of the Ball, and the Right of Way. A player traveling along hitting the ball forward on his right, or stick side, has the same priority as a driver on the left hand side of the road (this is more obvious to those driving in England!), and forcing him to brake by cutting in front of him constitutes a foul.

Teams swap ends after each goal scored to ensure that no team gains an advantage from the weather or the ground. Play resumes from the center of the pitch with the players lined up facing each other in the direction they are playing, and one of the umpires throwing the ball in between the two teams.

Crossing The Right of Way

Once a player has hit the ball, they must be allowed a clear path to follow on and hit it again as they have created a "right of way." Crossing is when another player turns into the path and crosses the line created by the struck ball.

Hooking

A hook is when a player is lined up to strike a ball, and another player hooks

their stick across their opponent's stick, thereby preventing the stroke. Whilst hooking is allowed, it is only legal if a player hooks the stick of the opposing player from the same side of the player as the ball. A hook is foul if it takes place over a pony's tail, over its back, or in front of or between its legs.



Dangerous Riding

It is perfectly acceptable to ride alongside a player's pony and prevent them from access to the ball (riding off) provided that the player does not ride off at an angle into the pony which the umpires consider dangerous. It is also illegal to hit the pony (or player!) Ride offs are exciting to watch and the ponies love them, but the umpire has the final say on the legality of the move.

Penalties

Any infringement of the rules can result in the umpires imposing a penalty which consists of a free hit towards goal from a distance set by the umpires. Penalties range in severity from the side fouled against being awarded a goal, to the least severe being a hit from the spot where the infringement occurred.

Polo Ponies

Restrictions on the height of horses for polo were abolished after World War 1. Prior to this, only ponies below 14.2 were permitted, hence the horses playing polo are still referred to as polo "ponies." Nowadays, the average

height of a polo pony is between 15 and 16 hands. The preferred breeds for polo are still the Argentine and Thoroughbred as these breeds excel at the skills required in a match. A good polo pony must be an athlete, able to stop, turn and accelerate very quickly. It helps if they can kick a ball too!

Many players will have a pony for each chukka in a match. However, it is possible to get by with less as a player is allowed to play a pony for two chukkas provided they have rested for at least one chukka between playing. Whilst seven minutes of play might not seem a long time, when you consider that the distance covered by a pony in each chukka

can be equivalent to The Grand National, you begin to appreciate how fit these ponies have to be. At the highest level, players will often swap ponies mid chukka, jumping from pony to pony without touching the ground.

A good relationship between player and pony is vital to success and players spend huge amounts of time schooling and stick and balling their ponies, getting to know each pony's strengths and weaknesses. The very best players and ponies appear to move in tandem with player and pony seeming to read each others minds.

Polo ponies are hogged as a long, flying mane makes it difficult for the player to see the ball. Their tails are tied up to keep them out of the way of the swing.

Ponies wear boots or bandages on all four legs to provide protection from the ball, mallet and other ponies hooves. Polo ponies are generally shod all round and are allowed to wear one rounded stud in the outside of each hind shoe. However, it is becoming more common to see polo ponies playing on grass with no hind shoes and playing shoeless in the arena.

THE PERFECT HOOF *Highlights*

THE NATIONAL EQUINE FORUM, ROYAL SOCIETY, LONDON NOTES BY KC LA PIERRE, R.J.F., Ph.D

The National Equine Forum is held annually at the Royal Society in London. The Forum is not well known, even amongst the general horse public of the United Kingdom. The purpose of the Forum is to give one voice to the United Kingdom's Equine Industries many recognized equine organizations. The Forum was first held in 1993 and has grown steadily to this date. A committee exists to organize each Forum; its task is not to follow up whatever may emerge at the meetings. The Forum and the Forum Committee are therefore not a threat to any other body and does not usurp their functions. Currently the Forum hosts over 85 organizations each year, with only two (2) delegates from each being invited to represent their respective group. The Forum has been able to operate continually for all these years, never having to charge the invited delegates for attendance. Each year, there are a few interested individuals that do pay for the privilege to attend; they are noted in the program as commercial delegates. It was interesting to see two commercial delegates representing the EPAUK in attendance; it was a shame that they were commercial delegates. It would have been better if the Forum coordinators had *invited* delegates from a group representing shoeless hoof care at this years Forum. It would have made a much louder statement, having invited delegates, rather than those that had to pay to attend; maybe next year. Considering it was made clear that only two delegates are ever invited to represent any given group, I can understand their decision. I suppose they considered Robyn and I those delegates. It was good having the extra supporters there just the same; as I doubt that next year hoof care will be a topic of discussion. The HRH Princess Ann was in attendance and spoke about strangles; it is very likely that strangles will be a topic next year.

The topics for this year's Forum ranged from the Government's view of the opportunities for the equine industry, presented by the Minister for the Horse Industry, to A Personal

View, presented by HRH The Princess Royal. Other topics included Strategies for the Industry, Equestrian coaching, Reducing stress in traveling horses, Equine tourism, Equine insurance, and of course Barefoot Strategies, followed by a Farrier's point of view.

My talk "Barefoot Strategies" was scheduled for 10:30 am, to be followed by the Farrier's View at 10:45 am. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, the Princess Royal did not arrive until after lunch. Simon Curtis, a noted farrier who represents the Worshipful Company of Farriers would present the farrier's view. We each had only fifteen minutes to speak, followed by a ten minute question and answer session. It was a daunting task presenting a digest version of our science in so little time. It was also a bit stressful knowing that the Minister of the Horse Industry, along with an impressive list of influential delegates were present.

Arriving at the Forum on the day of my talk we were met by Miles Williamson-Nobles, the Counsel Secretary for the Farrier's Registration Council. We had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Nobles in regards to trimming in the UK on several occasions throughout the day, and at length following the forum. In speaking with him, he made it very clear that no one group would be approved for trimming in the UK, but rather that it is more likely that a (NVQ) National Vocational Qualification would be established for trimmers. This NVQ would establish the minimum requirements needed to protect the horse and its owner. He, along with several other members of the Council and Farrier Registry Board, showed their support for our work, and offered the impression that they believed that the Institute was setting the standard that others should follow.

Mr. Nobles introduced us to John Smales, the Chief Executive of the International League for the Protection of the Horse (ILPH). Mr. Smales discussed the ILPH's position on trimmers in the UK, with Robyn and I

at length. He remarked that the ILPH is very supportive of our work and our Active Alumni Program (Continuing Educational Requirements).

My lecture and power point went well; though I will admit that time got the better of me. I have great difficulty saying hello in less than fifteen minutes, let alone define a science. Simon Curtis presented his view of farriery, which for the most part was quite basic. Most all of you would have heard it all before; nothing new in a science that maintains that it is needed because people can't do without it. The question and answer session went rather uneventful. One gentleman, who introduced himself as a member of the Farrier Registry Board asked how they could stop horse owners from trimming following just a weekend course. Simon Curtis responded by saying, we can't. He continued by stating that it is very unlikely that in his life time that they would see a change of the laws regarding horse owners trimming their own horses. Later that evening this sentiment was reverberated by Miles Williamson-Nobles in a conversation he had with Robyn, where he stated that it is unlikely that the farriers act would be changed in his career or life time.

In conclusion the Forum was a powerful, eye-opening learning experience. Robyn and I both came away feeling more confident than ever that our goal of making Applied Equine Podiatry the chosen alternative to conventional farriery is a realistic one. In fact, it has begun to happen, and my being invited to speak at such a prestigious venue, to so many influential delegates, confirms it. I do believe that I was the first American Farrier to be asked to speak at the National Equine Forum in all its fifteen years of existence. I was honored to represent our beliefs and our science.

Let the Paradigm continue.....

THE PERFECT HOOF *Highlights*

SHOELESS POLO CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Apsley End Polo Club

We have around 30 barefoot polo ponies at our club during the summer and 20 during winter. About 7 years ago, we'd come to the conclusion we didn't need hind shoes on our horses. We'd had trouble with horses kicking each other in the field when a new horse was introduced and so had decided to remove the hind shoes from the horses when a new horse was added to the herd. Having done that and noticed no difference in the performance of the horses, we decided to leave the hind shoes off and see how they did.

Then we bought a horse with a strained tendon. She arrived shoeless and had 6 months off for her tendon to recover. We then started getting her

times the farrier trimmed her, she was quite sore for about 4 days afterwards and the next time he came I said that it didn't seem to be working and maybe she needed front shoes. He asked for one more chance and did a very gentle trim and we had our first barefoot horse.

Over the next few years, we started taking all the horses barefoot, with the last one having her front shoes removed about 18 months ago. This horse is 20 years old and had been diagnosed with navicular syndrome when she was 13. We'd switched her to Cytek shoes, and she'd come sound so we'd been reluctant to take the shoes off

since they'd "fixed" the problem. However, when she developed seedy toe and the farrier did a huge resection on her foot, we took the plunge and left her shoes off.

We continued with farrier trims for all the horses pretty successfully until last year. For some reason, at the beginning of last year, our farrier seemed to become

much more aggressive about shortening the toe. After every trim, the horses would be foot sore. I kept reminding him to be gentle with them and not take too much foot off, but it seemed to be the nippers on the toe that was causing the problem.

I started looking around for alternatives and had already come



across some KC trained DAEPs, so we decided to switch some of the horses to an HPT Method, AEP, and see how they got on. By the time we hosted a KC course in July last year, it was becoming apparent that the horses being trimmed by the DAEP were doing better than the horses trimmed by the farrier.

We had quite extreme conditions in the UK last summer with a very wet May and then virtually no rain in June and July, so the polo pitch was like concrete. The farrier trimmed horses suffered from cracking and chipping while the DAEP trimmed horses suffered much less cracking and chipping. There was still some cracking and chipping but much more superficial than on the farrier trimmed horses. So, following the July course, we switched all the horses to the HPT Method and AEP.

This year we intend to put the horses in pads on the horse walker for the two weeks when we start getting them fit for summer, which will be in the next couple of weeks. We are hopeful that this will reduce any cracking and chipping even further this year. Time will tell!



fit in a sand arena and she didn't seem to need shoes. When it came time to start playing on the grass, I asked the farrier to put shoes on her and he replied that it seemed a shame to put nails into such lovely feet. So, I gave it a little thought and decided we'd try her without shoes. The first couple of



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