



# Talkin' Horses



## Healthy Horses: White Line Disease

January 2011

Rebecca Gillen, BS, Class of 2014

Collin Mitchell, Assistant Professor of Equine Surgery, Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences, School of Veterinary Medicine, LSU

Neely Heidorn, Equine Extension Specialist, LSU AgCenter



LSU SCHOOL OF VETERINARY MEDICINE  
EQUINE HEALTH STUDIES PROGRAM

**General Information:** The white line of a horse is the area between the wall and sole of the hoof. White line disease is characterized by the separation of the white line from the sole of the hoof, which can continue proximally with the dorsal hoof wall separating from the insensitive lamina. Some of the primary reasons for separation are mechanical stress caused by excessive toe length, environmental conditions (excessive moisture softening the hooves/excessively dry conditions forming cracks in the hoof wall), laminitis, and hoof imbalance. When this initial separation occurs, bacteria and/or fungi can move into the space leading to infection. These organisms destroy the attachments between the outer hoof wall and the deeper tissues which lead to the severe separation seen in some horses. White line disease can result in lameness leading to displacement of the coffin bone if left untreated. The most common signs of white line disease are hoof wall separation noticed by a farrier during routine

trimming/shoeing and slow, poor hoof wall growth.

**Is it contagious?:** White line disease is not contagious. It is caused by opportunistic pathogens that live and thrive in certain environmental conditions.

**Diagnosis:** Diagnosis can be made by a farrier or veterinarian, based on identification of undermined dorsal hoof wall, with lameness only being present in severe cases.

**Important points in treatment/management:** Removal of all damaged hoof wall is the most important step when treating white line disease. After removal the use of a disinfectant or astringent (i.e. copper products) is optional as they do not appear to improve success rates. Iodine solution can be used, but is actually more useful to stain the tissue that has been removed to allow monitoring of the progression of the disease. The hoof wall can then be left to grow, but regular cleaning of the affected area with a wire brush should be performed and further tissue removal should occur as necessary. If further damaged hoof wall is identified (a straightened paper clip is good for this), further resection should be performed. Some horses will need to be shod to protect and support their feet following tissue removal. The amount

of hoof wall removal and degree of hoof deformity will determine what type of shoe will be placed. The hoof wall defect can be filled with acrylic, but only after complete resolution of the infection. Correction of the primary cause of separation will help prevent further recurring infections. Treatment should continue until all signs of disease are gone. If the affected area is up to the coronary band it can take up to 10 months for the hoof to grow out. The severity of the infection and amount of hoof wall removed will determine the length of time the horse should be kept from working.

**Prognosis:** Good, but White line disease can reappear making it necessary to monitor the horse's hoof health.

**Prevention:** The best preventative measures are to pick and clean the hooves regularly and to have regular trimmings by a farrier. The horse should be kept in clean and dry conditions. Addition of supplements such as biotin and methionine can be added to a balanced diet to encourage healthy hoof growth.

**Estimated cost of treatment:** Farrier costs vary, but should include resection, debridement, initial disinfecting, shoeing, and follow up visits. Radio-

### Inside this issue:

HEALTHY HORSES: WHITE LINE DISEASE	1
TRAINER'S CORNER: BUILDING A FOUNDATION THROUGH NATURAL HORSEMANSHIP	2
RESOURCES: EXTENSION HORSES LEARNING LESSON- HORSE HAY	2
RESOURCES: MY HORSE UNIVERSITY WEBCAST	3
E-TIPS	3
CURRENT NEWS: LEC HOSTS STOCK HORSE EXPO	3
CALENDER OF EVENTS	4

Graphs typically cost between \$100 - \$150 plus the cost of veterinarians office visit or farm call fee.

To schedule an appointment with the LSU Vet School Large Animal Unit please Call: **225-578-9500**. Business hours are 8am to 5 pm. If you have an Emergency call **225-578-9500** and the answering service will direct you to the on-duty clinician who will assist you.

For more information visit: [www.equine.vetmed.lsu.edu/equinehospital.html](http://www.equine.vetmed.lsu.edu/equinehospital.html)

# Trainer's Corner: Building a Foundation Through Natural Horsemanship

By Richard Hebert

“...ADVANCED MANEUVERS ARE NOTHING MORE THAN ADVANCED FUNDAMENTALS ON A SOLID FOUNDATION.”

If you were presented with one of my business cards for my horse training business you would see the title of this article printed as my motto. As you read it, you might think just what does it mean? Well just as you build a solid foundation for a building so it doesn't fall down, you would build such a foundation on a horse so it can go through its life as a good partner with its owner and not fall to bad behavior. An old saying goes this way “**the horse will always go back to where it started**”. In other words if the foundation is bad then the horse will revert to bad habits or even dangerous behavior. So how do we build this foundation? It's simple, you teach the horse to do the right thing, the right way, without resistance. Ok, so how do we do that? We have to gain control of the horse's mind. Still looking for answers? Ok follow three simple rules: **move the feet, move the feet, move the feet** in all directions: forward, back-

ward, left and right. Foundation training should start with a good fundamental groundwork program. Groundwork is very important to gain control of movement and form a good relationship with the horse. I recently worked a horse that had some problems under saddle; one problem was refusal to backup. As with every horse that comes in, I started a groundwork program. I quickly realized that the horse lacked a foundation in fundamental groundwork and therefore had a lack of control of movement. After a short time the horse started to develop a backup. Is it magic? No. Is it skill? Perhaps. Maybe it's just following three simple rules: **move the feet, move the feet, move the feet** in all directions while being consistent with positive reinforcement and recognizing and rewarding the slightest try. Was there resistance? You bet, but I worked through it until the horse moved its feet without

resistance. **You have to work through the ugly to see the pretty.** If the foundation is weak..., well you get the idea. You may be thinking, my horse backs real well but it won't load in a trailer, how do I fix that? The same way, follow the three rules, **move the feet...**, are you starting to get it yet? Too often horse folks abandon good fundamental training. They want to get to the advanced maneuvers quickly with poor results. Remember, advanced maneuvers are nothing more than advanced fundamentals on a solid foundation.

I've talked about the foundation, what about natural horsemanship? A simple definition is the art of working, training and riding a horse that works with the horse's behavior, instincts and personality in an easy and kind manner. WOW! What a concept.

*Happy Trails!*

## Resources: eXtension Horses Learning Lesson - Horse Hay

eXtension's team of horse experts have developed **FREE** specialized lessons to provide the most complete information about horse care and management. This month we direct you to the Learning Lesson about Horse Hay.

Good quality hay can provide ample nutrients to meet the needs of most horses. There is no right or wrong hay to feed your horse. As a horse owner, you must evaluate your individual horse's needs and determine the type of hay and feeding strategies that fit your feed-

ing program. This module is designed to give you the knowledge to make these decisions.

### Learning Objectives:

- Demonstrate the importance of forages (hay) in horse nutrition and health.
- Introduce horse owners to basics of horse hay, including definitions, feeding and uses, forage types, analysis, and marketing.

- Provide hay feeding examples for different classes of horses.
- Outline common issues horse owners may experience when feeding hay, including mold, poisonous plants, and excessive nutrition.

For more information or to utilize this great learning tool visit:

[http://www.extension.org/pages/HorseQuest\\_Learning\\_Lesson:\\_Horse\\_Hay](http://www.extension.org/pages/HorseQuest_Learning_Lesson:_Horse_Hay)



# Resources: My Horse University Webcast– Tips for protecting your barn and horses from disease

By Dr. Betsy Greene, University of Vermont

Along with eXtension HorseQuest, My Horse University offers **FREE** monthly webcasts from September through May. Check back frequently for the latest presentations added to the lineup! You can also catch up on any webcasts you may have missed by watching recorded webcasts.

Is your Horse Farm at risk from an equine version of “Typhoid Mary?” Do you know the most likely ways that your horse may be exposed to disease? How can you decrease your horse’s chance of infection in case of an outbreak? How do you care for, handle or clean up after a sick

horse has been identified? This Webinar will give practical evaluation methods and advise for prevention, protection, and proactive ways of minimizing disease risk in your horse facility.

To register for the Webcast visit:

<http://myhorseuniversity.com/resources/webcasts>



## E-TIPS: My Horse University - Operating a more environmentally friendly horse farm

- Reduce water runoff by installing gutters and downspouts on buildings
- Responsibly manage manure and soiled bedding. Consider composting.
- Follow the NRC nutrient requirements for horses to prevent over feeding.
- Utilize a rotational grazing system for your pasture.
- Mow pastures for natural weed control and erosion control.
- Manage rodents by cleaning tack and feed rooms. Store all feed in sealed containers. Consider a barn cat.
- For natural pest control, plant bushes, flowers and ornamental plants that attract insect eating birds and encourage the habitats of bats.

“STORE FEED IN SEALED CONTAINERS AND CLEAN TACK ROOMS AND FEED ROOMS REGULARLY TO MANAGE RODENTS..”

## Current News: Louisiana Equine Council Hosts Stock Horse EXPO

By Howard Cormier, LSU AgCenter Regional Equine Agent

The Fifth Annual Louisiana Equine Council Horse Expo will be March 19-20, 2011, at Burton Coliseum in Lake Charles. This is the first time that the LEC Expo is held in this area of the state, and it promises to be an exciting event. According to Heather Dionne, Chair of the Expo committee, the Southwest Louisiana culture of cattle and horses is an ideal place to hold an event of this kind. While the previous expos were designed to involve all breeds and disciplines,

this event has been named a “Stock Horse Expo” due to the fact that it will showcase the skills and talents of stock horses, real life cowboys of Louisiana, and stock horse training in general. The event kicks off Sat., March 19, with the Colt Starting Competition. Three trainers will have three unbroken horses from Gray Ranch to get going under in four hours. Participants will be Cory Bourque from Abbeville, Ethan Lee from Baton Rouge, and Joe Gotti

from Texas. There will be two sessions Sat., lasting an hour and half each, from 8 to 9:30 am and 3 to 4:30 pm. The final session will be Sun. from 9:30 to 10:30 am, with the final competition held at 10:30 to noon. The winners receive custom tack, with the overall champion winning a brand new ranch saddle. The colts will be available for sale after the competition.

A two year old registered AQHA

**CALENDER OF EVENTS**

111 Dairy Science  
 Building  
 Baton Rouge, LA 70803  
 Phone: 225-578-3431  
 Fax: 225-578-4008

**Click on the  
 events for more  
 information!**

**February**

- 5- LSU Vet School Open House, Baton Rouge LA
- 19- La Stock Horse Association Show, West Monroe LA

**March**

- 19- Leapin' for Life Benefit Horse Show, Baton Rouge LA
- 19- La Stock Horse Association Show, DeRidder LA
- 19 & 20 - La Equine Council EXPO, Lake Charles LA

- 26- La Equine Council Fun Ride, Cane Camp Kisatchie National Forest LA

**April**

- 2- Extreme Cowboy Race: Cajun Style, Amite LA
- 9- La Equine Council Gaited Horse Clinic, LeCompte LA
- 30- La Stock Horse Association Show, Lake Charles LA

**Louisiana Equine Council Hosts Stock Horse EXPO, continued.**

filly, provided by Daniel Lyons, President of the Louisiana Equine Council, will be drawn for before the Colt Starting Champion is announced. Raffle tickets will be available for sale before and during the Expo.

Maurice Tynes, NCHA AAA judge, NCHA Director, NCHA Professional Trainer, and stock horse judge, will teach how to effectively start young horses on cattle at 10 am Sat. That will be followed by a demonstration on how to sort cattle by Mr. T-Joe Smith.

A working stockdog is a valuable asset to any cattleman, and a demonstration of what a good dog should do will be conducted by Mr. William Hetzel on Sat. at 1 p.m. Mr. Hetzel did this demonstration at the 2010 Expo, and he is being invited back by popular demand.

Fran Hancock, a popular Lake Charles area horsemanship instructor, will present a natural horsemanship demonstration Sat. at 2 pm. Her soft and clear method of communication with horses will teach, impress, and entertain the crowd by making difficult tasks seem easy. Fran has studied extensively under Dennis Reis, a nationally recognized California Clinician, and has become his top trainer.

New to the Expo this year is the ranch sorting event, which will be held at 5 pm Sat. In this competition, two person teams will cut out 10 head of cattle from one pen to another in a specific order. The numbers on the cow's backs dictate which animal gets cut out first. If the wrong cow slips by, the team is disqualified. Winners compete for trophy belt buckles and cash awards.

Fran Hancock and Bob Goodner will

lead the Cowboy Church service Sun. at 7 am, followed by clinicians' demonstrations, then final round of the colt starting competition.

At noon, the always popular Greenwell Springs Youth Drill Team will entertain with high speed precision drills that will put spectators on the edge of their seats.

Sun. afternoon will also include a variety of demonstrations, such as comparing western training to dressage; saddle fit and care; freestyle riding; and more.

A Kid's Korral will also be hosted by Friends of Therapeutic Riding, Inc.

Booth space is still available for vendors. For more information, contact Heather Dionne at 337-794-9489.

**To contribute or for more information please contact Dr. Neely Heidorn at [nheidorn@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:nheidorn@agcenter.lsu.edu)**

**Visit us at [www.lsuagcenter.com](http://www.lsuagcenter.com) or on the [Louisiana Master Horseman Facebook page](#).**