



Covered Bridge Equine, P.C.



Winter 2009



!HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

We hope you are able to spend time with loved ones and recharge for a productive and healthy 2010. With the New Year, we recommit ourselves to our goals at Covered Bridge Equine, which are:

- PROVIDE THE HIGHEST QUALITY VETERINARY CARE FOR OUR PATIENTS
- EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE, BOTH IN PERSON AND ON THE TELEPHONE
- EMPOWER CLIENTS WITH THE BEST EQUINE CARE INFORMATION
- PROMPT AND COMPREHENSIVE 24-HOURS EMERGENCY SERVICE
- EDUCATE OUR CLIENTS ON ALL ASPECTS OF EQUINE HEALTH CARE
- EDUCATE OURSELVES ON NEW DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH

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The recession has caused a significant financial strain on everyone, and many horse owners must make difficult decisions regarding their horse's healthcare. Please know that we are always looking for ways to cut costs (without any impact to quality, of course) and pass the savings on to you. Some savings are big, some are small. But, we are committed to passing along everything we can. Therefore, we announce that:

1. In spite of increased costs, we are not raising any prices this year.
2. Local farm calls (Athens, Watkinsville, Bishop, High Shoals, and Farmington) are now 40.00 per visit.
3. Emergency calls are now \$50 before 8 p.m. and \$75 after 8 p.m.
4. Prices of dentals and health certificates have been reduced.
5. Vaccine prices remain the same as in 2009.



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WINTER REMINDERS

- 1. A safe and frost-free water supply should be available to your horse at all times.**
 - Horses will consume more water if it is provided at 50 degrees than at 33 degrees, which is important to prevent dehydration and impaction colics!
 - It is a very good idea to place water heaters in any water source available to your horse. This will encourage your horse to drink water throughout the cold winter months.
- 2. Good quality forage needs to be available to your horse.**
 - Horses are able to generate more body heat with hay than grain, and hay will provide them with the necessary roughage to enable proper G.I. health.
 - Horses are less likely to eat dirt and develop other adverse habits if they have good quality hay available to them. Offering hay will satisfy their natural instincts to graze and decrease boredom!
 - If a round bale is provided, ensure that it is placed in a dry, covered area. Hay that is left exposed to the elements is more likely to become moldy and spoiled, which can lead to health problems for your horse and excessive wastage of hay.
- 3. Routine dental care to ensure efficient mastication of feed.**
- 4. Proper immunizations and deworming programs should be implemented.**
- 5. Proper shelter to protect your horse from the elements.**
 - Horses fortunately have thick hair coats to protect them from the cold; however, if their coat becomes wet, it loses its insulating capabilities. A roof overhead and a protective windbreak are all they need, or a good waterproof blanket will suffice.

EQUINE CUSHING'S DISEASE

What is Equine Cushing's Disease?

Cushing's disease is a combination of clinical signs such as long thick hair coat (hirsutism), laminitis, increased water intake and urinating large volumes. The underlying cause is often a mass (benign tumor) in the pituitary gland, and is typically seen in middle aged horses. It appears to be more prevalent in ponies.

What are the clinical signs?

- ✓ Long and thick hair coat can also be unusually curly
- ✓ Abnormal hair coat shedding (shed late spring, winter coat comes in early fall)
- ✓ Chronic laminitis
- ✓ Lethargy
- ✓ Weight Loss
- ✓ Increased water intake and producing large volumes of urine.
- ✓ Higher incidence of infections (skin, sinus, dental, etc.)

How do we diagnose Equine Cushing's Disease?

- ✓ Usually based on history, clinical signs and laboratory tests
- ✓ Measuring plasma cortisol levels over a 24 hour period in conjunction with steroid administration.

How do we treat / manage Equine Cushings's Disease?

- ✓ The most commonly used drug is Pergolide (dopamine agonist).
- ✓ Pergolide is administered orally and helps to regulate the pituitary gland. This leads to improvement in clinical signs, i.e. hair coat, lethargy, water consumption and urination.
- ✓ There are other options that can be used in conjunction with Pergolide.
- ✓ Encourage exercise, if laminitis isn't a limiting factor
- ✓ Feed a low Carbohydrate diet

EQUINE METABOLIC SYNDROME OR “PERIPHERAL CUSHING’S SYNDROME”

What is Equine Metabolic Syndrome(EMS)?

By definition, it is the combination of obesity, metabolism/ hormone disruption, and slow onset laminitis. EMS is most commonly associated with pony breeds, Arabians, Quarter horses, Saddlebreds, Tennessee Walking horses Thoroughbreds and Warmbloods. These horses are typically called your “easy keepers” and don’t require much more than air to get fat on. Most horses start developing obesity around 3-4yrs of age, but may not encounter any problems until their early teens.

What are the clinical signs?

- Obesity
- Regional fat deposits i.e. cresty neck, fat deposit along the tail head and sheath
- Insidious(slow) onset of laminitis

Why are some horses more predisposed?

It appears to be a combination of genetics and environmental factors.

After an extended period of time of being obese horses will develop Insulin Resistance (IR), meaning they behave hormonally similar to a diabetic human except without such severely high blood sugar levels. IR is associated with inflammation throughout the body and is correlated with the development of laminitis.

How do we diagnose EMS?

- Measuring insulin and blood glucose levels(both are high)
- Thyroid concentrations(low)

How do we treat / manage EMS?

- Exercise if laminitis isn’t a limiting factor
- Feed a low starch / low sugar feed
 - Purina Mills Wellsolve L/S
 - Triple Crown low starch or light
 - Buckeye Safe n’ easy
 - Seminole Wellness
- Limit the amount of grazing when the grass is changing as occurs with:
 - Lush spring grass
 - First drought
 - After a heavy summer rain
 - Going into winter
- Utilizing a grazing muzzle or allow them to graze 1-2 hrs per day when the grass is going through a dynamic phase
- If diet and exercise aren’t proving to be enough, levothyroxine therapy (thyroid supplementation) can encourage weight loss and improve insulin sensitivity.

Tip of the day: consult with your local County extension service to assess your pasture and hay quality and composition.



FARM FOCUS



FOUR SEASONS FARM MADISON, GA

Four Seasons Farm (FSF) is located on 80 beautiful rolling acres just north of Madison and just south of Athens, Georgia. The extensive facility was designed and built in 1999-2000, and opened its doors in July 2000. The facility includes a beautiful barn with all the amenities, 2 outdoor rings, a covered ring, jump field, conditioning hill, trails, and large lush pastures. FSF offers the very best in care of the horses- they treat each horse as if they were their own. They cater to each horse's individual needs, and pride themselves in the full service care they provide to their boarders.

FSF specializes in show hunters and jumpers, and offer training, boarding, lessons, showing, and sales. Their training and lessons are for all levels of horses and riders, and they compete at all different levels of shows as well. They attend approximately 10 USEF 'AA' rated shows a year. FSF also compete at GHJA Local rated shows and the AAHJA (Athens Area) circuit. They tailor their program to each individual rider's goals and needs. For the horse's needs, they offer re-schooling and starting young horses, as well as keeping seasoned horses tuned for the show ring.

FSF offers lessons and training for students who have their own horses, and also have a wonderful school program. They have several very safe, sound, and happy school horses and ponies, and they are all excellent teachers. FSF also offers leases and half leases on their school ponies and horses.

The team at Four Seasons Farm believes in encouraging true partnership between the horse and rider. They look to create quality, and allow the horses the freedom to work through themselves properly. They always keep the horse's best interests in mind as they strive for the rider's goals. They believe their system not only keeps the horses happy and healthy but also allows them to be the very best they can be.

New to Four Seasons Farm this year is the Interscholastic Equestrian Association riding teams for high school and middle school students. They currently house and train the Morgan County High School Equestrian Team. In only 3 shows, the team has already qualified for the Regional Finals and has been incredibly successful for a brand new team. FSF has also started a riding team for Athens Academy. The high school students are competing this year, and the middle school students will begin competition next year. These teams offer high school and middle school students a chance to obtain school recognition for their equestrian efforts, as well as preparing them for college riding. Students from other schools and home schoolers are also allowed and encouraged to join.

Kat DeMas Mulkey is the owner and head instructor, and she has 30 years of experience in the horse world, including 16 years as a professional. Kat is an experienced teacher, rider, judge, steward, and clinician. She is also a certified equine appraiser. Kimberly Hezzelwood is the assistant instructor and has been with Four Seasons Farm for over 4 years. She graduated from Virginia Intermont College's prestigious equine program. Molly Flavin is the barn manager, and she holds an incredible wealth of knowledge and experience in horse management and basic veterinary care. Greg Mulkey, Clint Grubbs, and Scott Henson manage the maintenance and day to day stalls and farm duties. The staff at FSF are all very dedicated and experienced, and the farm is so fortunate to have such a knowledgeable team.

For more information about Four Seasons Farm, please visit their website at www.fourseasonsfarm.com. To contact them directly, please call Kat DeMas Mulkey at 706-342-7577 or email at katdemas@aol.com.