

TALKING DRESSAGE

ISSUE 7 2012



From the editor...

Welcome to Talking Horses Dressage 7. It is over 3 years since I penned my first 'Talking Dressage' newsletter and I must say that I enjoy writing the newsletter for each issue.

I expect that many of you have been frustrated by the continuing wet weather affecting virtually the whole east coast and central west. The wet underfoot conditions have resulted in many horses going lame due to softened hooves and developing hoof abscesses and greasy heel. These topics are covered for anyone interested in the practical management of wet weather problems in the latest 'Talking Horses' Equestrian issue (E28). This new issue can be obtained by emailing Gary at newsletters@kohnkesown.com. Some of you may already subscribe to this newsletter and other editions as well. For those interested in breeding, the new issue of 'Talking Breeding' will be available in the next week or so. Contact Gary if you would like to subscribe for the regular 3-4 monthly 'Talking Breeding' newsletter.

With outdoor arenas often having drainage problems under wet conditions, I have included in this issue some handy hints on maintaining the arena surface to try to avoid loss of training days. I have also included a discussion on 'suppleness' or what the classical German teachers describe as 'losgelassenheit' or relaxation. It is one of the earlier steps in the training pyramid or program for dressage.

And to top it all off, we give some handy hints on the causes and how to avoid soft swelling in the legs, how to bandage the legs to ensure that tendons are not overloaded or misaligned.

I hope that you enjoy reading 'Talking Dressage' 7. If you are competing in the Dressage with the Stars competition at Werribee or the CDI at SIEC, we wish you every success and a great weekend of dressage.

All the best,

Dr John Kohnke BVSc. RDA

'SUPPLENESS' - WHAT IS IT?

The expression of 'suppleness' is one that many riders aim for in a horse when training for dressage. It is derived from the German word 'losgelassenheit' which is translated as meaning relaxation and gentle free movement and an even, flowing stride. It also encompasses increased body muscle and physical fitness to encourage blood flow, warming and stretching to increase and establish an extended range of movement and elastic rebound in the joints, tendons and ligaments of the lower limb, flexion of the head, neck and back during exercise. It should enable a continuation and improvement of the extended movements and joint mobility to the next training session and recovery without stiffness or soreness after work.

In fact, 'suppleness' follows rhythm and regularity in movement and is one of the early stages worked on after initial fitness training before more complicated movements are attempted as part of dressage schooling.

It is achieved before asking for contact where the horse is encouraged to work and stretch into a soft rein and learn to move with a natural controlled movement of its head.

'Suppleness' also enables a horse to relax in movements during transitions and maintain contact gently as the reins are lengthened at a controlled working speed. The horse is encouraged to move with an even stride, flex easily to the side and move its body through the back, with its tail swinging freely from side to side. As the horse becomes 'supple' and learns to relax, it loosens at the poll and begins to exhale air in synchronisation with its leading forelimb movement, with a soft rhythmic breathing sound through its nose.

In the next issue of Talking Dressage, we will discuss methods of achieving suppleness through passive and dynamic stretching exercises, massage and encouraging a horse to relax during training.

In this issue...

- * **Suppleness - what is it?**
- * **Arena Surfaces and Drainage - practical hints**
- * **How to apply a working bandage**
- * **How to avoid limb swelling**

Plus handy hints and lots more!

Handy Hint 1: Increasing Exercise Intensity

Once a horse has achieved some fitness after starting training initially with long - slow - distance (LSD) conditioning exercise for up to 60 minutes in a session, then the work intensity can be increased to improve fitness and recovery. Dressage horses have to be cardio-vascular and muscle fit to adapt to higher levels of training. The initial early fitness training can be work segments of 3-5 minutes of walking and trotting and 1 minute of light cantering in 1:1 work to rest ratio, with the horse walking relaxed in the walk segment and performing bending and lateral work at the walk. The frequency, type and duration of the exercise can be increased to improve fitness for medium exercise intensity. This can be achieved by increasing the segment times of the walk and trot/canter by 1 minute at a time, up to a maximum of 8 minutes. Two trot and canter segments can be interspersed with one extended movement on each training day. The extended work can be increased by 1 segment per week until up to 3-5 extended movements in a daily training program for up to 60 minutes. The extended exercise at the trot and canter will help to improve impulsion and strength. However, if the horse starts to find the intensity too high and starts to tire or lose impulsion, then reduce the cantering duration until it can adapt to the higher intensity training level.

(Adapted from Conditioning Sport Horses Hiliary M. Clayton Sport Horse Publications 1991 p 168)

Handy Hint 2: Trim the Hooves to Ensure Symmetrical Balance

A horse's hooves should land in a balanced and symmetrical pattern to ensure even distribution of weight onto the hoof walls and soles. It is important to take into account the symmetry of the hoof shape relative to the limb conformation. Each hoof should land in a flat strike pattern. Ideally, your farrier should have you walk and trot the horse away and toward him to assess the foot fall pattern, flatness of the strike and any deviations caused by lower limb conformation. It is essential that the natural balance, wear patterns and shape of the unshod hoof be evaluated when trimming the hoof prior to barefoot trimming and/or shoeing. It is unwise to impose a symmetrical shape by corrective trimming and shoeing to achieve an ideal hoof shape. If the mature horse has a minor conformational deviation, then the hoof can be trimmed to reduce the gait abnormality, but not completely reshape the hoof to change the way the horse moves its lower limbs. This will help correct minor abnormalities which could have an effect on the horse's cleanliness and symmetry of stride, but not impose additional corrective turning or break-over patterns by radical trimming to achieve an ideal conformation. Excess corrective trimming can impose strain and rotational forces on upper limb joints and result in premature breakdown.

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ARENA SURFACES AND DRAINAGE

The continuing wet weather in many areas has waterlogged even the most well drained outdoor dressage arenas, causing costly damage to the working surface and the underlying base. In some cases, riders have had to stop using an arena for weeks due to poor drainage and flooding from surface water.

Normally our drier Australian climate enables many riders to have all-weather outdoor arenas, as compared to Northern Hemisphere climatic conditions where extended cold weather, snow and high rainfall make it difficult to maintain outdoor menages and training surfaces.

Although efficient drainage and choice of the best all-weather working surface can be planned for when building a new outdoor arena, it is often difficult and costly to renovate an existing arena to improve drainage when the weather conditions make it a messy and prolonged job. Many riders have a strict budget to install, renovate and maintain an arena. Although many suppliers of arena surfaces claim them to drain well and be virtually maintenance free, arena surfaces need regular maintenance under wet or dry conditions. Time and money must be allocated to repairing, replenishing, renovating and rejuvenating the arena surface to maintain it in a suitable condition for regular daily use. This is particularly important where a number of horses are worked on a daily basis on the arena and also during very wet or dry weather extremes.

It is true to say that for every hour of riding on an arena, at least 30 minutes or an equivalent amount of time should be allocated to maintenance. This is especially important where high traffic loads are carried or when extremes of weather alter the dynamics or damage the surface.

Maintaining Drainage during Wet Weather

It is important to ensure that your arena is able to drain both through the surface material and into the compacted base or deep drainage pipes and off the surface itself as well during heavy rain. In any heavy downpour, surface drainage using a slope on the arena must be able to remove up to at least 60% of the dumped water where an underwater drainage system is not installed or is not working efficiently.

There are many pros and cons associated with gradients or sloping surfaces on an outdoor arena. The benefits include some drainage to the side where the subsoil under the compacted base is mainly clay and is unable to drain or seep away quickly. Clay is great to hold a reserve of moisture in the subsoil profile and maintain the moisture content of the compacted base layer above it, but it is slow for water to permeate through it to drain away after heavy rain. The lower side of any slope, whether it be as little as 600mm over a 20 metre width, is likely to become water-logged if a large volume of surface water accumulates along the boundary and cannot drain away quickly. Horses working on the downside of the slope are likely to divot and pug the surface when working along the outer border of the arena.

Did you know that...

An average 650 kg Warmblood exerts a weight loading of double its body weight on the hoof in contact with the arena surface when working at trot and up to 3 times on the ground contact limb at the canter, and even higher loading when working on a circle under saddle with the added weight of the rider. The high loading forces of up to 2,000 kg weight bearing load at the canter are exerted through a front hoof contact area of about 150 square centimetres, equivalent to around 13.3 kg per square centimetre, or roughly 183 per square inch (psi) of loading and potentially compacting pressure. This high loading weight can depress and punch through a thin, softened under-surface base layer during wet conditions.

The surface material, unless it is held in a fibre matrix, and any silt which accumulates and floods with the surface water flow as the arena drains, is also likely to migrate to the lower side over time. The surface material must be moved back regularly and spread across the eroded or shallow areas, especially after heavy rain. This is best carried out by repeatedly harrowing or dragging the arena along the side border and turning the harrows in an arc to towards the centre line to pull the surface away if it has migrated down the slope during use or by rain and water flooding to the lower side. In severe cases, a front end loader may be necessary to move a large bulk of migrated material back towards the higher side and spread it out and flatten it off.

Did you know that...

Surface materials, such as coarse sand can be pulverised by the hooves and shoes as a horse works, reducing the particle size over a period of time. The smaller particles increase the dust on the surface during dry weather if the arena is not kept moist using sprinklers or sub-surface reticulated watering systems. During wet conditions, the smaller particles of sand wash in between the coarser grains of sand and behave like silt to block normal drainage through the surface profile. Any organic matter, such as horse manure or sawdust mixed into the sand surface increases the silting effect to seal off the normal drainage through the profile to increase water logging and bogging of the surface. Once the silted surface dries out it becomes compacted and can increase the concussion and risk of joint and hoof jarring as a horse works, particularly at the trot or canter. The same problem occurs in sand day yards where horses are confined and walk around pulverising the sand. Feed residues dropped around feed bins combine with the silt particles to reduce drainage, resulting in compacted, wet areas around feed bins or areas where droppings accumulate in corners, along fence lines or under shade trees.

Where tracking and rut formation occurs on the lower side, this can act as a depression or silt lined 'trough' to hold water in heavy downpours, such as during a thunderstorm or continuous rain periods. This may prolong drying out for several days even under warm summer conditions. Unfortunately, if the outer border of an arena becomes water-logged, it is often on the perimeter tracking surface where horses work on a regular daily basis. It is not a good idea to retro-fit or locate gravel and slotted pipe agricultural type drains along the lower border if water collects in the tracking area. The drains themselves are subjected to higher compaction loading during all types of weather and combined with surface shift of materials and silting, they can quickly lose their draining efficiency. Ideally, any subsurface drainage system should be positioned along the quarter lines where horse traffic is usually the lowest on the arena. Locating drains sideways across the arena is also problematic as the surface can become patchy in consistency as the moisture content is higher over the location of the line of the drains.

Handy Hint 3: Regular Harrowing is Essential

After heavy or continuous rain, as soon as the arena is dry enough to withstand the weight of a wheeled garden or larger tractor pulling a set of harrows or an arena surface rake or 'tickler', opening of the surface material will improve drying out, aeration and make the surface more friable to improve drainage. Indeed, if rain is forecast, it is a good practice to harrow the surface to open it up before the rain to improve its overall draining efficiency by filling in low spots which pool water and open up any silted patches which would normally not drain quickly and prolong the drying out process. If the arena is flat or drains to the corners, then harrowing to create small contours in the harrow furrows will help to even out the drying effect and if the 'headlands' from the centre to the corners are harrowed, the furrowing effect can assist surface water flow to aid drainage.

Maintaining a Dry Surface

Under very dry conditions, the surface has to be maintained regularly. Even the new poly surfaces featuring sand and fibre blends will migrate under dry conditions. They can also pool and silt under wet conditions if not maintained regularly as recommended. Therefore, regular harrowing to aerate and improve drainage, usually after each day's use is important, as it will also avoid compaction and is essential to maintain a high quality, safe working surface. Electronic moisture monitoring probes are available and extremely useful on any arena to map moisture patterns, especially on synthetic poly arenas so that maintenance can be targeted to problem areas as quickly as possible. However, with experience, you will be able to note areas which need attention by the way a horse moves over the surface when under saddle.

It is important to reduce cross winds to reduce surface drift and drying out of any arena. If there are shade trees tall enough to cast shade across any area of an arena, especially in the afternoons, the surface will not dehydrate as quickly during warm conditions and not dry out as rapidly after rain or irrigation, as compared to an area on the centreline exposed to full sun for most of the day. It is important not to plant trees which are likely to grow to 6 metres or more in height within 20 metres of the arena as the streaming of sunlight between trees to create shaded and sunny strips can make it difficult for horses to concentrate because of the changing light patterns cast by the trees.



Handy Hint 4: Carefully Design the Sprinkler Layout

If you decide to install sprinklers on the fence lines of an arena to irrigate the surface during dry conditions to prevent drift and improve the workability by having a damp working surface, then they must be carefully positioned so as to not overlap excessively which can create wet patches, as well as waste water from mist and drift during windy conditions. It is a good idea to consult an irrigation engineer to design the sprinkler pattern and the type of sprinkler nozzle and head to ensure even distribution of the water pattern on the arena. Always maintain the sprinklers to avoid blocked nozzles etc which will change the rate and pattern of delivery. Watering at night or during the still conditions of early morning reduces evaporation and allows time for moisture to rehydrate the surface material. In Europe, subsoil watering systems are available which are created by positioning a reservoir dam next to the arena which is 150mm lower in water level height than the arena. Rows of small pipes or very porous stone material acts to maintain a constant small volume flow or seepage supply of water to the surface material to ensure that it remains in optimum condition during dry periods. During rainy periods, the subsoil pipes or porous under-layers reverse their function to act as drainage pipes back into the dam which can be regulated by a floating sensor to discharge excess water away from the arena.

Handy Hint 5: Designing and Building a New Arena

It is important that all aspects of the location, the selection and compaction of the base layers, drainage system proposed and choice of surface material be carefully considered before building a new arena. Simply hiring a bulldozer operator to flatten, or especially carve out a 'cut and fill' to make a flat arena site, unless it is located on a hilltop with good drainage and on deep sand as a subsoil drainage base, may not result in an efficient, well drained all-weather outdoor arena. It is best to seek professional help of an experienced or qualified arena builder or soil engineer to survey the levels, test the soil profile and design the drainage system to match the worst rainfall scenario to give you a high quality usable working arena in the years to come. This even more important if the site is based on clay subsoil and a 'cut and fill' levelling operation is needed to create the site. Choose high quality material, such as ripped sandstone rock, road base or easily compacted crusher fines which can be watered and compacted with a vibrating roller to form a minimum, well compacted 200mm (8") thick support base for the arena surface, whether you choose sand, a special loam mixture, a synthetic or rubber surface or wood chips as the working surface. Pay particular attention to established natural drainage flows onto the site and be prepared to construct contoured drainage or diversion channels to prevent water flooding or seeping under the arena during wet weather.

Also trees can remove a lot of subsoil moisture and cause dry spots to form in patches where their roots have invaded under the arena. As an example, a typical 15-20 metre eucalypt tree can draw up to 200 litres per day to replace transpiration losses and maintain its vigour, which can quickly dry out the arena surface. However, certain trees, such as willows are useful to remove water from drainage lines well away from the arena, but their roots will invade underground ag-pipe drains and in time, damage and block them if they are planted around the perimeter of an arena. Do not plant Oleander trees anywhere near an arena or horse yard, as they are the one of the most poisonous plants to horses.

Although mineral oils are used to reduce dust on race tracks and a rotary hoe is used to distribute the oil into the surface material on sand tracks, oil repels water during wet weather and can reduce drainage and become slippery.

Replenishment of Surface Material

Most arenas will need a top-up of the surface material from time to time. This will help avoid the micro-finishing of the surface and maintain a more even profile. Ideally, any silted areas should be scraped off with a shovel or small bucket loader or grader and removed and replaced with coarse, fresh sand similar to the type originally on the arena. All wheel steer loaders (eg Bobcats®) are very useful to move and mix surface material on high traffic arenas, but care has to be taken to avoid surface shift and shear during turning. Ideally, a covered heap of new surface material should be kept in reserve near to the arena to allow convenient top-up as needed. However, place the material on a thick black plastic sheet to avoid grass invading the stockpile and reducing its quality and increasing the contamination with soil and roots. It is also best covered with black plastic to prevent plant colonisation by wind-blown seeds, as well as to avoid loss of fine particles by wind or animals burrowing into it or using it as a toilet.

Drainage around the Arena

It is essential that all arenas are flanked by an open or grated drainage system to remove surface and sub-surface drained water. This is particularly important where the arena has been located in a 'cut and fill' area on sloping ground. These drains must be maintained to prevent silting and erosion and be located so that they can drain away to a lower point beyond the arena. The entrance to the arena should be over a small bridge with side safety rails, or a covered large pipe drain wide enough to allow comfortable access and to avoid any damage to the drainage ditch.

Do not channel water from an arena drain downhill into a dam which is also used as a water supply for horses. Stables, wash bays and especially holding yards should not be allowed to drain into a dam used for stock water. Heavy contamination with organic matter, as well as residues of minerals such as salt, can accumulate in the dam. During a dry period, the evaporation of water from the dam on hot days increases the concentration of organic matter in the water and the risk of horses not drinking the water or developing diarrhoea or other health issues due to odour, taste or the contaminates in the water.

Handy Hint 6: Remove Manure Promptly

It is very important to remove any droppings passed during a training period or workout. If a horse is worked over it, it will become mixed into the arena surface material and add organic matter and even faecal residues of oil etc to the surface profile, which in time, will alter the surface characteristics and reduce drainage efficiency. Removal of manure is helpful to reduce fly worry when working a horse on the arena. The small black house flies (*Musca domestica*) which are common around horses, will lay their eggs to breed in the organic residue. Even avoiding a horse stopping to urinate during a work-out will help to reduce the organic matter load on the surface and drainage system, as well as minimise odour under wet conditions. Horse urine contains up to 30% mucus which facilitates odour producing bacteria, as well as act as a binding agent between surface particles to reduce drainage efficiency. It is best to try to condition a horse to pass urine before entering the arena to work as it also enables some horses to work more comfortably with an empty bladder and focus their mind and energy on training. The practice of allowing horses to use an arena as a holding yard during wet weather when the normal day yards are boggy, increases the organic load and compaction on the surface material as horses walk around the arena. At no time should horses be fed on the arena as spills can add organic matter and the area where they were fed may distract horses from concentrating when working.

How to Wrap a Working Bandage

It is important that bandages provide protection, but do not constrict the limb when the horse is exercising. Always ensure that the bandage is flat and free of ridges and folds by rolling it carefully into a roll before wrapping. You must always wrap the limb in a circle direction so as to pull the tendons to the inside, to help avoid abnormal alignment of the tendon as the limb bears weight. On the right (offside) limbs, the bandage should be wrapped in a clockwise circle (to the left) and on the left (near side) limbs, wrap in an anti-clockwise direction (to the right) to keep the tendon alignment on the inside of the limb. When wrapping, start on the lower part of the leg to be wrapped, wrapping the first layer around the limb firmly and folding a small part of the free end over the outside of the initial layer in order to lock the bandage onto the limb so that it is unable to loosen and twist, unravel, or distort the skin. Wrap the bandage firmly, but not too tight in layers around the limb, overlapping each layer by a third as it is wrapped. Finish at the top and secure by adhesive tape or bandage clips. Do not use safety pins or round cord to secure the wrap, as the thin edge may act as a ligature on the limb. Check the tension by pushing your index finger from the top down in the tendon groove - it must not feel excessively tight. Rewrap if necessary.

Remove the wrap immediately after exercise to allow the limb to cool down, using cold water hosing or ice to cool the tendons. Tendons warm to 45°C during exercise due to the heat generated by their elasticity. Failure to remove a thick working bandage promptly after exercise, particularly prior to travelling can damage the tendons. Retention of heat each time after hard exercise may eventually denature the tendon matrix and core fibrils and weaken the tendon, leading to an increased risk of tendon breakdown.



How to Avoid Limb Swelling

Horses in heavy training can develop fluid swellings under the skin of the lower limbs, referred to as 'oedema'.

It can result from a number of underlying conditions or causes. These include concussion as a result of working on a hard compacted arena, blood flow restriction due to hoof compression or internal inflammation which reduces blood perfusion and results in flow of blood serum into the lower limb subcutaneous tissue, long periods of confinement with inactivity, the result of an allergic reaction to grain, a high protein diet and skin contact allergy from grass or wet sand. It can also result from anaemia and hypoproteinaemia in the blood due to heavy worm burdens.

The possible underlying cause should be investigated as management and treatment varies relative to the cause.

Did you Know That...

Soft oedema or tissue fluid swelling is generally cool to the touch and when the forefinger is pressed into the swelling for 10 seconds & then withdrawn, the imprint of the finger remains as the fluid is slow to return within the oedematous tissue. However, a similar degree of swelling which feels warm to the touch and when pressed with the forefinger feels like there is pressure under the skin and almost instantly rebounds when the finger pressure is withdrawn, is usually caused by a more serious form of inflammatory reaction due to infection, more severe tissue injury or blood capillary rupture. In this case, the swelling may only slightly subside with cold therapy, but returns quickly after the pressure and cold have been removed. The swelling may be caused by a developing hoof abscess, a joint injury or tendon strain which may result in the 'pressure' filling in the limbs. If the horse exhibits any sign of a shortened stride or lameness, rest the horse and seek advice from your vet before the condition becomes more serious if the horse is continued to be worked.

Concussion

The high impact forces of the hoof on contact on a compacted, dry arena surface, increases the natural protective cascade of inflammatory protein compounds within the hoof tissue and lower limb structures. Some of these protein and cytokine compounds escape through the blood vessel walls into the surrounding tissue within the lamellae and internal structures of the hoof to result in localised inflammation and changes in protein permeability of tissues and blood vessel walls. It can be likened to an early transient case of 'road founder', without the severe concussive trauma which precipitates the damage and tearing of the lamellae within the hoof. This results in pooling of small molecular weight protein compounds including fibrinogen and fluid in the subcutaneous tissues under the skin of the lower limb. This in turn appears as a soft, relatively cool swelling which develops during and increases in the 20-30 minutes after concussive exercise.

In this case, applying ice under a light pressure bandage to the affected limbs for 10-15 minutes, or alternatively, cold water hosing the lower limb for 10 minutes after unsaddling, then walking the horse for 10 minutes after the cold water hosing, will help to dissipate the soft swelling. Often it is a one off reaction, but if a horse regularly develops the swelling after exercise, then its hooves and shoes should be checked for sites of discomfort and excessive pressure being loaded onto the sole inside the white line or at the quarters or heels. Horses with flat feet are more likely to develop soft swelling and horses which have recently been trimmed back too short at shoeing can also exhibit similar swelling in the lower limb. Many of these horses show signs of hoof tenderness and a shortened stride when working.

Long periods of Inactivity

This type of soft, pitting filling is associated with stasis or reduced blood perfusion in the lower limbs during a long period of inactivity. It can occur as a horse rests standing up in a stable or yard overnight, or when travelled in a truck or trailer for more than 3-4 hours at a time. In an aged horse, it can be due to low blood pressure as a result of a severe heart murmur and left-sided valve leakage, or right sided congestive heart failure. In most cases, the swelling will subside within 30 minutes into a training period or when the lower limbs are hosed with cold water for 10-15 minutes. If it recurs on a regular basis, consult your vet for advice.

Allergic Reaction to Food or Proteins

A sudden change of feed containing higher intakes of oats or other cereal grains and legume proteins, such as soyabean meal, lupins and even prime lucerne hay can result in a systemic allergy to protein and cool oedematous filling in the lower limbs, especially when a horse stands for long hours overnight feeding or resting in a stable. In some cases, the horse also develops soft raised and non-itchy swellings ranging from the size of a 20 to 50 cent coin on the neck and sides of the chest and between the legs. However, this type of oedema can also be caused by hypoproteinaemia due to blood protein being lost as a result of heavy worm burdens, severe diarrhoea, anaemia and starvation, the latter being unlikely in a well wormed, fed and pampered Warmblood dressage horse. In this case, although the filling will often subside with exercise or cold therapy, if it recurs regularly for a few days or longer, the diet should be investigated to check for possible changes and an allergic protein intake, grain or a new brand of prepared feed with higher protein. Reverting to a bland diet of white chaff, equestrian pellets, hay and a supplement, such as **Kohnke's Own Cell Vital** or **Aussie Sport** for a few days may help to resolve the filling in the limbs and other signs of a food related allergy.

Handy Hint 7: Limb Swelling due to Heavy Worm Burdens

If the horse develops a large amount of soft filling in the lower limbs overnight, then it may be caused by the protein loss associated with heavy immature and adult Small Redworm burdens. A manure egg count carried out by your vet on a freshly collected sample of droppings (only one ball of manure is needed) can be used to confirm a high Strongyle egg count, which would normally be above 1000 eggs per gram if the loss of blood and protein was the underlying reason for the hypoproteinaemia and associated oedematous soft swelling. The horse may also exhibit reduced exercise tolerance, tire easily, pant more when working and recovering and have pale, anaemic gums. In this case, worming out with a larval active worming compound would be recommended, repeating the worming in 3-4 weeks in horses with a high faecal egg count. Consult your vet for advice. If the horse is also anaemic as a result of the heavy worm burden and loss of protein and blood leakage from the gut wall as the worms feed, then the addition of an iron and B group vitamin supplement to the feed, such as **Kohnke's Own Cell-Iron** at 20g daily for 3-4 weeks, would be beneficial to provide blood regenerative nutrients.

Product of the Month

Kohnke's Own[®]

GASTRO-COAT

A practical method to minimise the risk of gastric burn and ulceration is to feed a 'snack' of 4-5 litres dampened lucerne chaff, 4 scoopsful of **Kohnke's Own Gastro-Coat™** (assists chewing and salivation by providing mucilages lost in heat processing of feeds) and 2 tablespoonsful (40g) of fine limestone (Ag-lime) to buffer excess gastric acid, given 30 minutes before training each day and before travelling to a competition. This small amount of 500g of feed prior to exercise helps the horse settle and get back on its feed after exercise as it helps reduce gastric acid 'splash' onto the sensitive stomach lining during exercise. If this daily routine is commenced from the day a horse is brought into training, reports indicate that most horses, including known 'ulcer' horses, appear to be very less likely to develop gastric burn and associated loss of appetite during training for competition. The 'snack' feed can be given 30 minutes before travelling to help make the trip more comfortable for an anxious horse. Available in pack sizes 1kg, 3kg, 6kg, 10kg & 20kg.



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