

Events to look forward to:

Companion Animal & Horse Afterschool Program, Seward Middle School

- Starts: January 26th, 2015

UNL Equestrian Team Horse Show

- February 7th-8th, 2015
- February 20th-21st, 2015

Horsin' Around

- February 28th— March 1st, 2015

Stampede & 4-H Bark Off Contest

- March 14th, 2015

Canine Companion for Life 4-H Dog Expo

- May 1st-2nd, 2015

Horse Judging Clinics

- To Be Determined



New App To Body Condition Score Your Horses

Want to keep track of how fat or thin your horse might be? Are you running a horse training business, or boarding horses and want to be sure they are in a good body condition? Are you working with a 4-H Horse Project club and need to teach the members quality horse care? Check out the new **HorseBCS** mobile application created by eXtension-Horses, the University of Nebraska and Purdue University that gives horse enthusiasts a fun and easy way monitor and record their horse's body condition score. www.tinyurl.com/horsebcsapp

The app, allows you to take a photo of the horse, record its body condition for each of the major areas, and then save the photo, stamped with the horse's name, date and location. If you aren't familiar with body condition scoring, there are videos and photos to teach you how to condition score your horse. https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLS_j7MIcs2AE9of8ZJGrD4B-CiLvcSJjW

The tool is great for any horse owner, but especially for those who want to be able to track the condition of their horses. Commercial stables can use this to document the condition of horses in their care, volunteers working with 4-H youth can use it to help their members learn to evaluate their own horses, and people in law enforcement who may be called out on horse neglect cases can use it to accurately and consistently record the condition of horses they see.

The app is a must-own for any horse owner, and is available for \$1.99 at the IOS/Apple store/iTunes and Android/Google Play, just search **HorseBCS**.



<http://animalscience.unl.edu/horse-trail-challenge-4h>

Visit the link below to sign up for the C & H Newsletter:

<http://go.unl.edu/chsignup>

Obesity Management in Dogs

By: Lisa Karr-Lilienthal, PhD, Companion Animal Extension Specialist



A recent survey found that over half of dogs are overweight or obese. Obesity is the most common nutritional problem among dogs today. Poor feeding habits, such as feeding table scraps or too much food, and a lack of physical activity greatly contribute to the development of canine obesity. Dogs that are obese are at a higher risk to develop health disorders, including cardiac disease, diabetes, respiratory problems, arthritis, increased risk of injury, and complications during surgery. Although obesity is a common problem, the steps to treating this epidemic are quite simple.

Pet owners are less likely to rate their dog as overweight than are their veterinarian or other pet professionals. This disconnect is probably due in part to people's perception of overweight. When an animal is overweight, it weighs 5 to 10 percent more than its ideal weight. On the other hand, an animal is obese when it weighs at least 20 percent more than its ideal weight.

Predisposing factors

For the majority of animals with obesity, the cause is an inappropriate diet. An inappropriate diet may be due to the owner not being aware of the animal's nutritional needs. In other words, owners may feed too many calories to an inactive animal. This caloric imbalance may be due to improperly measuring food or feeding an animal ad libitum. Owners also tend to give their dogs treats or human foods that are high in calories, which can quickly lead to excess weight gain.

Many dogs only get limited amounts of exercise or go for walks for the purpose of urination or defecation. Dogs need structured activity, and to not just be turned loose in the back yard, to ensure that they are getting proper exercise. When dogs are only allowed a limited amount of physical activity, the probability of weight gain increases.

For some breeds of dogs (Labrador retrievers, dachshunds, beagles, Cairn terriers, and Basset hounds), there may be a genetic predisposition to being overweight. These dogs may require fewer calories per day due to lower activity levels. In addition, some hormonal disorders (such as hypothyroidism, pituitary gland disorders, and hyperadrenocorticism) can lead to an increased risk of obesity due to the effect of hormones on metabolism. Spaying or neutering of dogs also results in decreased physical activity and can lead to weight gain. For this reason, owners should strictly monitor the daily feeding amounts of altered, or fixed, pets.

Weight management plans

There are many different techniques used to achieve animal weight loss. No weight loss plan should be started without first consulting your veterinarian to make sure there are no risks associated with the change in routine. The starting point for a weight loss plan should involve adjustments to the amount and types of foods provided.



TRIVIA!

Test your knowledge with the following trivia questions! (Answers on page 4)

- What part of the horse's body acts as an insulator in the winter?
- What breed of dog was trained for rescuing travelers in the Alps?

4-H Bark Off Contests

March 14th, 2015

Great opportunity for youth!

- Dog Skill-a-thon
- Dog Quiz Bowl
- Public Speaking Contests

MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON!

**UNL's East Campus Animal
Science Commons**

For More information visit companionanimal.unl.edu or contact:

Dr. Lisa Karr-Lilienthal | lkarr-lilienthal2@unl.edu



Obesity Management in Dogs (continued)

Provide your dog a low-calorie, higher fiber diet intended to promote weight loss. You will want to introduce the new diet gradually over the course of a week by blending it with your dog's current food. Acclimating your dog to a new food will help decrease the chance of food avoidance and digestive upset.

Accurately measure the amount of food offered in so only the proper amount of calories is provided each day as indicated by the label guidelines.

Feeding your dog scheduled meals may assist with setting a routine for your dog and ensuring accurate monitoring of food intake. Limit or stop providing high-calorie treats. Treats should make up less than 10 percent of your dog's daily feed intake. Try using your dog's food itself as a treat for a low calorie option.

Physical activity is also a major part of the weight loss process. Exercise provides dogs a way to have fun while burning excess calories. There are a variety of options for pets to enjoy; however, before beginning a new activity, it should be approved by a veterinarian for the pet's safety. Examples of acceptable exercise include:

- Walking
- Running
- Swimming
- Obedience
- Agility
- Hunting
- Playing fetch



Maintaining an ideal body weight in companion animals is important. You can use the body condition score system from Nestle Purina to determine where your animal falls. The ideal dog should have a BCS of 4 to 5.

Maintaining Your Horses Weight Over The Winter Months

By: Lena Cottle, PhD Horse Extension Specialist

Many horses tend to lose weight during the winter months. Why might this be? Many things can be blamed for a shaggy, underweight horse during the wintertime months, but several of the most common include the following:

- Poor feeding regimen
- Not taking into account increased caloric needs
- Feeding the wrong quantity or quality of grain and hay
- Dehydration
- Parasites
- Dental issues
- Age



Poor Feeding Regimen

- Horses need constant access to quality grass or hay, rather than one or two big hay and grain dumps morning and night. Horses are foragers that munch up to 18 hours a day, which is why you'll notice happy, healthy horses during the summer months if they're turned out on good pasture to graze.

Inattention to Increased Caloric Need during Winter Months

- Like people, horses need to burn more calories to stay warm during winter months. Humans often use that as an excuse to indulge in a second slice of cake on a long winter's evening, but horses legitimately need those calories in the form of forage. A healthy digestive system is an active digestive system — and digestion helps create heat, too.

Feeding the Wrong Quantity or Quality of Hay

- All hay is not created equal. You probably already know that hay varies in quality, ranging from low-protein oat hay to mid-protein grass/timothy hay, to protein-heavy alfalfa. If you have any doubts about hay quality, request a professional hay analysis from your hay dealer.



Feeding the Wrong Quantity or Quality of Grain

- As any owner of a hard-keeping horse will tell you, giving your horse more to eat doesn't necessarily mean he'll put on weight. Feeding more grain morning and night can actually cause your horse to lose weight, since processed feeds are harder for horses to digest (especially in large quantities). Undigested starch in the hindgut can cause diarrhea, ulcers, colic and plenty of other problems that cause weight loss.

Help us make our newsletter better!

Answer the following questions and send your response to <http://go.unl.edu/chsurvey>

1. What would you change about this issue?
2. What is one thing you'd like to see in the next issue?
3. Do you believe there is helpful information in this issue? If so, what is helpful?
4. Any other suggestions to better our newsletter?

Trivia answers!

- What part of the horse's body acts as an insulator in the winter?

Their Hair!



- What breed of dog was trained for rescuing travelers in the Alps?

The Saint Bernard!



Dehydration

- Just as you probably don't feel like guzzling ice-cold water when it's snowing outside, horses are also more prone to dehydration in the wintertime — and care givers who forget to break the ice on water buckets don't help things! Since horses need water to process their food, dehydration can lead to all sorts of problems in the hindgut, including increased acidity and toxins that can make your horse uncomfortable or lead to more serious issues like hindgut acidosis, colonic ulcers, and colic.



Parasites

- Your horse is probably already on some type of worming schedule, but remember that while worms go dormant in the winter, they don't die off completely. Be sure to stay up-to-date on fecal exams (Halloween and Easter are good target dates).

Dental Issues

- Poorly tended teeth are a common cause of winter (and summer!) weight loss. If a horse can't chew, he can't eat. Chewing also produces saliva, which buffers the continual production of acids in the horse's stomach — offering a natural protection against gastric ulcers. Also, these starches and sugars can reach the hindgut when the horse is unable to chew properly and consumes grain meals too quickly. Undigested starch in the hindgut creates lactic acid which causes the horse discomfort, and can also lead to colic and laminitis.

Age

- A horse's age plays a major role in his ability to maintain winter weight, as the fingerlike projections that absorb nutrients in a horse's digestive tract don't work as well as the horse ages. Like humans, older horses' teeth as well as kidneys and liver, also deteriorate over time, which is why it's imperative to keep your horse's digestive system as healthy as possible through good feeding habits and attention to overall health.



Strategies to Prepare for Winter

- Of course, the best cure for winter weight loss is to nip it in the bud before November strikes. That means preparing for frosty mornings while the grass is still knee-high in the fields. Maintaining a healthy weight year round requires attention to everything from dental health to properly seeded fields, but it hinges on maintaining a healthy digestive system.
- A healthy horse requires constant care. Here are a few of the around-the-clock things to keep in mind:
 - ◆ Schedule regular visits from your farrier (every six to eight weeks)
 - ◆ Ensure bi-annual dental checkups and care
 - ◆ Provide free access to high-quality pasture grasses and/or hay to keep your horse's teeth and digestive system healthy
 - ◆ Minimize grain and concentrates, which can lead to diarrhea, weight loss, ulcers, and colic when fed in large amounts (instead, replace with soaked beet-pulp shreds, which are calorically equal to oats, but are more easily digested)
 - ◆ If you do choose to feed concentrates, mix in chaff or beet pulp (no molasses) to slow your horse's ingestion rate and increase saliva production, which aid digestion
 - ◆ Keep to a regular de-worming program that accounts for regional parasite schedules
 - ◆ Provide constant access to fresh water



Is your local youth doing great things with companion animals or horses?!

Do you have updates or news on youth in your area dealing with companion animals or horses? If so, send the information and pictures to lkarr-lilienthal2@unl.edu or lcottle2@unl.edu. Your youth may be featured in our next issue!

**Companion Animal
And
Equine**

Companion Animal
Dr. Lisa Karr-Lilienthal
Phone: 402-472-6458
Email: lkarr-lilienthal2@unl.edu

Horse
Dr. Lena Cottle
Phone: 402-472-9098
Email: lcottle2@unl.edu

Dr. Kathy Anderson
Phone: 402-472-6414
Email: kanderson1@unl.edu

Horse & Companion Animal
Kathy Pothoff
Phone: 402-472-9021
Email: kpottoff1@unl.edu

**UNIVERSITY OF
NEBRASKA-LINCOLN**

animalscience.unl.edu

Like us on Facebook at

<http://www.facebook.com/UNLhorse>

&

www.facebook.com/UNLcompanionanimal



UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Lincoln EXTENSION

2014 4-H Horse Stampede

Mark your calendars! The 2014 4-H Horse Stampede has been scheduled for **Saturday-March 14, 2014.**

Contestants, all entry forms must be returned to your County Extension Office by **Friday-February 13, 2015. County Extension please send a printed copy of this form by **Friday-February 20, 2015.****

****New this year – speech contest can be done at your local extension office through adobe connect on the day of the contest (Schedule with your county office)**



Horsin Around 2015

February 28th-March 1st, 2015

This year's presenter will be Jeff Mellott of Andover, Kansas.

He is an AQHA Professional Horseman, AQHA & NSBA Judge, Past President KQHA, KQHA Volunteer Award 2012, AQHA Trainer of multiple World & Congress Champions.

“My goal is that each rider enjoys the journey to their own success in and out of the arena.”

For the first time in 17 years, Jeff is now able to take outside customers. Youth, Amateur & Select spots available. Specializing in All-Around horses & exhibitors. Also Specializing in Horsemanship, Trail, and Western Riding.

Jeff is a true master at teaching you how to reach your highest levels in any event.

Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

The 4-H Youth Development program abides with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture