Salt Needs of Working Horses
By: Kathy Anderson, PhD, Equine Extension Specialist

As we get into the hotter days of summer, our horses often will sweat more and require more salt in their diet. Ever notice your horse trying to lick your hands? Your horse may be telling you it is in need of salt. If the craving for salt is not met, you also might begin to notice your horse eating less feed and drinking less water. Next, your horse may begin to lose weight and become dehydrated.

However, this is something easily corrected. A non-working horse’s total diet should contain at least 0.1% sodium (0.25% common salt), but a sweating, working horse needs 0.3% sodium (0.75% common salt). Most feeds naturally contain very low levels of salt; therefore it must be supplemented. Commercially prepared feeds often contain 0.5 - 1% salt. However it is generally recommended that additional, free choice salt is also available at all times. When your horse begins to sweat, the salt requirement will increase.

A horse’s salt requirement is proportional to the amount of sweating. A working horse can lose as much as 35 grams of salt when sweating. This increased loss of salt due to work in not commonly replaced by the amount of NaCl in commercially prepared feeds. Therefore, it is suggested salt also be made available for free choice consumption. Salt has been found to be the one mineral supplement in which horses will consume only as much as needed. Sodium is the only mineral found which horses have a specific appetite for and will self limit the amount they consume.

Free choice salt can be provided either as block or a loose form. Horses will tend to consume higher levels of the loose salt than salt provided in blocks. Providing either loose or block salt is simple. Stall feeders for loose salt are available at many feed or tack stores and are easily mounted in most stalls. Blocks can be placed in mounted feeders or if on the ground, should also be placed in some type of on-the-ground feeder.

Supplemental salt is available as either common salt (NaCl) or trace mineralized salt. Trace mineralized salt can assist in providing some additional trace minerals required by horses. Common trace mineralized salt typically contains sodium chloride (98%), zinc (.1 to .35%), manganese ((.2 to .28%), iron (.15 to .35), copper (.02 to .04%), cobalt (.05 to .007), and iodine (.007 to .04%). Specialized trace mineralize salt varieties may contain various levels of specific minerals formulated to meet the needs of lactating mares, growing foals, or other known mineral deficiencies. However, none of these salt mixtures contain calcium or phosphorous. Trace-mineralized salt is generally a blue-grey or dark reddish-brown color and plain salt is white. However, the label should always be checked as the colors may vary.

Even though a horse’s needs for salt increases with sweat, this supplemental salt should be provided year round. This will ensure your horse always has sufficient opportunity to consume the required amount. It has been found; horses have a wide variety of the amount of salt consumed. Furthermore, intake will increase during hot, humid weather-with or without exercise.

Visit the link below to sign up for the C & H Newsletter:
http://go.unl.edu/chsignup
Preventing Problem Behaviors in Our Household Pets

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

Problem behaviors like fur chewing, digging, spinning or other repetitive behaviors are coming in many of our small companion animals. Caged animals like guinea pigs, hamsters, mice, and rabbits need to express normal species-specific behaviors regardless of the environment it is kept in. These behaviors are those that they perform naturally in the wild and innate or they are born with the desire to perform. However, there may no longer be a need or an outlet for them to perform the behavior in their cage.

Examples of these behaviors include being prey animals and naturally live in social groups. Rabbits, for example, are prey animals so they tend to be on alert for danger at all times. They may hide or mask signs of illness so as not to draw the attention of predators. In social groups, rabbits regularly participate in a variety of different activities like social grooming or play. Foraging (seeking) for food is another behavior that many wild animals spend a large amount of time completing. However, in their cage, they are provided with free access to food and water in a dish.

The animal still needs to take part in these instinctual behaviors, but being kept in a cage presents a problem for proper expression of these actions. Rabbits and guinea pigs naturally need social contact with others of their species or with humans. Rabbits housed together are more likely to display normal behaviors and have lowered stress levels. Rabbits that are inappropriately paired may exhibit unwanted aggressive and mating behavior, so proper introduction is essential.

Although actions such as digging, chewing, and barbering are natural behaviors, they can pose a problem in captivity. Owners need to be aware of natural behaviors of their pet to understand the reason for the unwanted behavior. In addition, owners should know how to prevent and prepare for these behaviors before they become a serious problem.

The most common behavioral problems observed in caged pets include:

- Digging
- Chewing
- Barbering
- Fighting
- Biting
- Kicking
- Inappropriate urination

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

- What part of the horse takes up the most space in its head?
- How tall (in height) did the tallest dog ever stand?
Many of the behavioral problems can be alleviated by providing healthy alternatives to the unwanted behavior. Often the problems stem from boredom or lack of a behavioral outlet. Enrichment is added to the animal’s environment to stimulate their brain and challenge them to prevent boredom. If supplied with proper enrichment, attention, and environment, they will begin to direct the unwanted habits into proper behavior that can be entertaining to watch as an owner.

Some ways to provide proper enrichment for your animal include:

- Ensuring proper cage size and requirements. The larger the cage you can provide the more enriched the animal will be.
- Providing proper toys. Choose toys that are appropriate for the animal and will not cause the animal injury. Rotating the toys every couple of months will ensure the animal does not get bored of them.
- Providing hay. Loose hay provides an excellent source of enrichment and fiber for small herbivores. This can prevent digestive problems and does not add to the risk of obesity.
- Giving your rabbit treats in moderation. Adding variation to their diet can help to stimulate the animal. They also serve as a reward when training or handling your animal.

Properly grouped animals. Many small mammals are social. You must make sure you establish your social group while the animals are young and have not reached sexual maturity to prevent fighting.

Handle your animal properly and regularly. Regular handling establishes the bond between you and your pet. Time outside of the cage can allow for exercise as well.

Enrichment is a great way to prevent unwanted behaviors and improve the quality of life for your pet.

For more information, visit www.extension.org/companion_animals
**2014 State Horse Show Results**

The 2014 Fonner Park State 4-H Horse Show was a huge success. There were over 424 exhibitors and 1,214 entries at the show this year! Here is a list of the Champions and Reserve Champions for each class:

- **Junior Hippology**: Champion: Buffalo County (Nicole Messbarger), Reserve Champion: Lancaster County (Ashley Clegg & Kat Meyer)
- **Senior Hippology**: Champion: Frontier/ Dawson County (Dannyl Bromander, Amanda Larson & Leah Treffer), Reserve Champion: Saunders County (Kate Brabec, Cheyenne Kems, Victoria Vosler & McKinley Wilson)
  - Yearling Fillies (Lunging Halter): Champion: MaKenna Rasmussen, Washington County
  - 2 Year Old Mares (Lunging Halter): Champion: John Essink, Otoe County
  - 3 Year Old Mares: Champion: Shelby Engels, Buffalo County, Reserve Champion: Leah Treffer, Dawson County
  - 4 & 5 Year Old Mares: Champion: Madison Wolter, Gage County
  - Yearling Geldings (Lunging Halter): Champion: Jordan Jurgens, Gage County
  - 2 Year Old Geldings (Lunging Halter): Champion: Kaylyn Kucera, Madison County, Reserve Champion: Lucy Geweke, Valley County
- **3 Year Old Geldings**: Champion: Victoria Korth, Adams County
- **4 & 5 Year Old Geldings**: Champion: JNan Wittler, Gage County, Reserve Champion: Chloe Brown, Hall County
- **Junior Judging Team**: Champion: Buffalo County (Ashley Kemp, Emilee Hinrichsen, Emily Meyer & Kinley Greenough), Reserve Champion: Lancaster County (Ellie Bunz, Katherine Cooper & Madison Sobotka)
- **Senior Judging Team**: Champion: Lancaster County (Caitlin Davis, Hailey Hula, Nicole McConnell & Kate Rawlinson), Reserve Champion: Dawson County (Kylee Miller, Tigh Renken, Jessica Schmidt & Emily Smith)
- **Junior Showmanship**: Champion: Kaitlyn West, Dawson County, Reserve Champion: Callie Finn, Wayne County
- **Senior Showmanship**: Champion: Selena Finn, Wayne County, Reserve Champion: Jasey Christensen, Platte County
- **Trail Horse**: Champion: Shelby Engels, Buffalo County, Reserve Champions: Lauren Woodward, & Matthew Graves, Hall County
- **Junior Hunter Under Saddle**: Champion: Andrea Jagels, Madison County, Reserve Champion: Kallie Olmer, Madison County
- **Senior Hunter Under Saddle**: Champion: Laura Nagengast, Knox County, Reserve Champion: Anna Heusinger, Lancaster County
- **Junior Hunt Seat Equitation**: Jocilynn Behlen, Platte County, Reserve Champion: Laura Rankin, Greeley County
- **Senior Hunt Seat Equitation**: Paige Reeble, Douglas/Sarpy County, Reserve Champion: Giselle Brennan, Hall County
- **Hunter Hack**: Champion: Haylie Pointer, Lancaster County, Reserve Champion: Marjorie Dean, Saunders County

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**Help us make our newsletter better!**

Answer the following questions and send your response to [http://go.unl.edu/chsurvey](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?

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**Trivia answers!**

- **What part of the horse takes up the most space in its head?**
  - Their Teeth!
- **How tall (in height) did the smallest dog ever stand?**
  - 2.8 inches!!
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!
Photography Tips for Taking Great Horse Photos

By: Kathy Potthoff, Extension Educator

- With many days left of warm weather and horse events still to come, it’s a great time to review some basic photography tips that can help you capture special moments for future enjoyment. Just incorporate these tips, have some practice sessions and you will notice great improvement in your photos!

- **A Clean Horse** – be sure the horse has recently had a bath and is groomed. Give the whiskers, ears, fetlocks, and bridle path a fresh clip. All tack should be neat and clean. For close up shots, be sure to clean out eye matter and wipe the nose area. Dirt and mud spots show up more prominent in a photo. Apply fly spray to avoid flies which can ruin a good close up shot.

- **Have Help** - Recruit one or two people to help hold the horse and to stand in back of you to entice the horse to put their ears forward. Helpers should stand behind or to the side of the photographer for the desired attention focus. Have helpers use whatever captures the horse’s attention: grain, shaking rocks in a bucket, gently swinging a lead rope, snapping fingers, whistling, carrots or food, etc… Keep a photo session short to keep horse and rider’s attention.

- **Watch the Angle** – photos taken from too high or too low of an angle can make the horse conformation look distorted and not a true representation of what the animal actually looks like. Photos taken from too high of an angle can make the head appear larger or longer. Photos taken from too low of an angle can make the legs look short and stubby. It may be helpful to drop to one knee when taking a still shot so that the body of the horse is in a straight line to the center focal place of the camera.

- **Posing** – check head height, feet location, and that the horse’s body is straight with weight on all legs.

- **Check Photo Boundaries** – look at the edges of the photo. Don’t cut off the top of the horse’s ears or the horse’s feet at the bottom of the picture when capturing a full body shot.

- **Photography Equipment** – Be sure to check all of the equipment to be used. Digital memory cards will need enough space to accommodate new photos and that batteries are charged and ready.

- **Background Clutter** – Watch out for power poles, signs and vehicles that can ruin a good shot. A solid background can show the horse and rider clearly with less interference.

- **Keep Camera Steady** – To stabilizing a camera hold your arms along the sides of your body to act like a tripod. A fence, edge of a building or other structure can also work for ease of transitioning from space to space. Holding your breath can also help avoid blurry photos.

- **Practice** - and take lots of pictures! Examine your photos after you’ve taken them and look for ways to improve your shots. Check your manual for ways to improve the shots. You can also study the poses that are highlighted in magazines and web sites. Get some ideas for what you want to capture. Take several of the same shot so you have several pictures to select from. Watch for those candid shots that have extra meaning and allow your creativity to take over.

Try out some of these tips to capture many special moments. Remember that paying attention to some of the details while taking the photo can make it easier to get a great photo that can be enjoyed by everyone.