

The Colonial Williamsburg Animal News

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COW & SHEEP UPDATE

By Elaine Shirley

We got confirmation on our cows pregnancies a few weeks ago. Nora, Alice, and Hannah are all due to have calves in the spring. They were at National Colonial Farm for the summer with a Devon bull. Since we don't know the exact date of conception, we're not sure exactly when the calves are coming but it should be March to early May.

The 3 youngest Dorset Horn/Wiltshire Horn ewes are going up to south central Pennsylvania to be bred with a Wiltshire Horn ram. The lambs would be 3/4 Wiltshire and they will be a part of our continuing rare breed effort here at Colonial Williamsburg. The Wiltshire Horn is a very old British breed which is a meat animal. They produce wool which is shed every year. Shedding of wool is a very ancient trait that has been bred out of most modern sheep so the sheepman can shear on his own schedule, not the sheeps!

The Leicester Sheep soap opera continues . . . The Tasmania Leicester Longwools bound for Colonial Williamsburg have been delayed. Their trip from Tasmania to the mainland of Australia was uneventful. However, when they were about to leave for North America, one of the ewes was determined to be too close to lambing and so the group stayed behind. We have just heard that the sheep are now in Montreal, Canada in quarantine. If no problems arise, they should arrive at Russ Dow's farm in Ontario by December 12. They are expected to arrive in C. W. in mid-January.

NEW NEWS

We have taken the under carriage of the Landau to Pennsylvania to be restored, with the rest of the carriage. We finally received the appropriate Coach Lace, from Germany, for the upholstery work on the vehicle. Hopefully we will see the carriage back here this coming summer fully restored and ready for use.

Friday (the flea-bitten gray colored horse) has left us and found a good home in the local area.

Topsy and Prince, one of the Percheron teams, are at Carter's Grove on TLO for a few months. Ruby and Diamond previously on TLO have returned back to work.

RISING STARS

The Draft Horse and Mule Show held on September 28 at the Virginia State Fair was the Cream's debut. They were invited to do a presentation on American Creams. This gave us a chance to educate the draft horsemen and general public, as well as a learning experience for the young Creams. Mary Margaret (2

year old filly) and Moses (yearling) were chosen for the task. Mary Margaret won first place in grade mare class (no cream class yet!). Moses and Mary together received 4th place in get of the same registered sire. Then came the presentation--Moses was led right up to the grandstand where everyone could see him. At the same time the announcer read a prepared speech on American Cream Draft horses.

For their first public appearance the Creams did an excellent job. We spoke to a lot of interested people and handed out pamphlets on the breed. The State Fair has asked us back next year and would like us to do even more presentations!

On October 16, Maymont Foundation had their Victorian Day. It was free to the public and was an open air festival involving many historical aspects of Maymont. This year they included the Children's Farm with different rare breeds. Moses was invited up to help educate the guest on American Creams. We passed out pamphlets and spoke to many interested guests. Maymont is looking forward to the English Leicester sheep, too. They would like some of them to come up for sheep to shaw demonstrations in the spring.

EQUINE DENTISTRY

By Stan Rudacil

In order to understand Equine dental care more thoroughly, one must be aware of what food stuffs the horse is best equipped to handle. Generally our prepared sweet feeds are ground too fine and the pelleted feeds too soft, to result in enough wear for the teeth to be self-maintaining. On the other hand, to complicate the picture, there is a general tendency to overgraze pastures causing horses to eat more silica than normal, thereby causing more wear. In short one should schedule a dental examination at least once a year even though no problems are evident. This will help prevent any serious problems from forming.

The mouth of the mature horse has 38 to 40 permanent teeth, there are on the lower jaw - six incisors, two "corners", two intermediates, and two centrals. There are three premolars and three molars, the wolf teeth being milk teeth. All permanent teeth continue to grow, even in the absence of wear, they are pushed out of the alveoli (tooth socket), by a slow growth of bone beneath the socket. This is the main reason that floating must be done on horses that have uneven wear. This growing along with the biting action of the incisors are responsible for the angulation that is observed as the horse ages.

There are four general purposes for performing dentistry in horses; to relieve pain, improve condition, prevent waste of grain, and as an aid in training. The first three are usually clinical entities that can be identified with proper examination, the later is much harder to identify and treat, due to many variables that are hard to control. Many times the dental technician is asked to treat problems that are due to improper equipment or use of equipment, or is due to just plain poor training and riding. All of the above can be treated more effectively if the horse owner gives a complete history of the horse before treatment is begun.

Good equine dentistry consist of three phases: 1) the examination, 2) treatment and 3) follow up examination.

THE EXAMINATION is as important as the treatment to obtain good results. The horse owner should have a history prepared to aid the technician. This should include such infor-

mation as; eating habits, head carriage, age, refusal to drink cold water, frequency and dates of worming, recent illnesses, and when possible the owner should be prepared to demonstrate oddities related to feeding or riding. The examination should consist of a general observation of the horses' overall appearance, palpation of the external surfaces of the cheeks, jaw, and the space under the jaw where the lymph nodes lie. Next, the lips and gums should be observed for sores or injuries, the color of the gums noted and the tongue examined to see that it is not the cause of the symptoms. Next the lower arcade incisors and canine teeth are inspected, and any abnormalities noted. The same is repeated for the upper arcade. The premolars are inspected by feel and visually as is possible. It is almost impossible to visually inspect the molars without a speculum. This is only necessary if there is suspected a fracture or infected tooth, as any unevenness in wear will be revealed by the feel of the floats as they travel over the molars. It is not necessary for a technician to use a speculum, as any treatment other than floating, cleaning and removal of caps and wolf teeth should be left to a veterinarian.

TREATMENTS. The most common dental problems in horses are those caused by anomalies in structure and number of teeth, abnormal bone formations of the jaw, retention of caps (deciduous teeth), and irregular wear due to food stuffs. Treatments consist of cleaning, floating, removal of caps, medication, extractions, and surgery.

Cleaning of the teeth is usually done when a mineral-like deposit surrounds the base of the tooth, or invades the interdental space. This build up causes the gum tissue that surrounds the tooth to become inflamed, and in advanced cases, a withdrawal of the tissue making the tooth have a longer appearance.

Floating or rasping of the teeth is done where there is unevenness of wear that hinders mastication or causes pain to the adjunct tissue. Cleaning, floating, and removal of caps can be done by a technician with a good knowledge of equine dental anatomy, or by your veterinarian. Medication, extractions, and surgery usually go hand in hand and should be undertaken only by a veterinarian. A change in feed stuffs is primarily used when a condition warrants a coarser or softer textured food.

FOLLOW UP EXAMINATION. In order for the treatment of a condition to be considered successful, all symptoms should be eliminated. This conclusion should be a judgement of the technician and horse owner together. This requires a follow up examination and in some instances, additional treatment. It is not uncommon for more than one condition to exist at the same time, this becomes apparent only after the elimination of one of these. Often the horse owner will not call the technician when symptoms continue because they fear the additional cost of another visit. Also, some symptoms are covert and the horse owner does not recognize them as they think they are part of the horses' personality.

Editors Note: Stan Rudacil is master Farrier of the Dean Forge Interpretation program. He shoes our C. W. horses, and attends to their dentistry.

12 FREQUENTLY ASKED OXEN QUESTIONS

By Richard Linger

Q - What Is An Ox?

A - Any member of the bovine (cattle) family, regardless of breed, that is trained to work is considered an ox. Mostly steers (castrated bulls) are used for this purpose.

Q - Were Oxen Used Much In Colonial Williamsburg?

A - Up until the middle of the 18th century, the ox was doing most of the heavy work. Horses were primarily used for transportation.

Q - Did The Use of Oxen Fall Rapidly After 1750?

A - Virginia agricultural statistics of 1850 show 35,662 oxen still being worked in Tidewater Virginia.

Q - Are Many Oxen Used in This Country Today?

A - A few are still being used in logging operations, but many are trained as a hobby and used in pulling contests.

Q - What is the World Picture Concerning the Use of Oxen?

A - It is estimated that 4 out of every 10 head of cattle in the world today are still being used as draft animals.

Q - How Expensive Were Oxen to Buy in Colonial Virginia?

A - Most were being advertised from 2 to 6 pounds per team.

Q - What is the Life Span of an Ox?

A - They can live close to 20 years, but the working life will depend on the regularity and severity of the work.

Q - Were there Large Oxen in the 18th Century?

A - The *Virginia Gazette* of May 1769 tells of an ox butchered in New York that weighed 2615 pounds. The same paper of March 1767 informs us about a team of oxen brought to Williamsburg from Connecticut that were 20 hands high. (a hand is 4 inches)

Q - How Powerful is an Ox?

A - I have seen teams in pulling contests dragging 2 1/2 to 3 times their own weight.

Q - How Are Oxen Controlled?

A - This is done by voice commands. The whip is used only to keep their attention and to reinforce the commands if necessary.

Q - When do You Start Training Oxen?

A - It is best to start with the calves when they are just a few weeks old.

Q - Do You Ever Shoe Oxen?

A - Yes, if being worked heavily on hard or rocky ground.

CHRISTMAS TIPS

- * Store antifreeze in tamper proof containers.
- * Keep holiday plants like Poinsettias and Mistletoe out of the reach of young children and pets (they're poisonous).
- * Remember tinsel and lights are attractive but can cause severe intestinal damage and electrocution.
- * Table scraps on holidays can make a pet's day, but in moderation.
- * Chocolate can be poisonous to dogs and cats, so keep those holiday treats out of their reach.

From all of us to all of yours
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? Please write to:
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