



WHAT'S UP DOC?

OCTOBER 2016

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Subtle Lameness Can Cost You the Win.



Subtle, hard to diagnose lameness is a common cause of poor performance by horses in all disciplines. Pinpointing the cause of pain and creating a treatment plan is the best way to ensure the success and longevity of your equine athlete.

Our highly qualified veterinarians utilize both state of the art technologies as well as years of experience to analyze equine lameness. Our veterinarians have extensive backgrounds in raising, riding, shoeing, training, and competing with horses and mules.

Horsemanship and an understanding of equids makes each one of them conscious of all aspects of the horse's health and well-being. *Lameness* is defined as an asymmetry in the horse's way of going. There are many causes of lameness that can involve the neck, the back, and any, or all four of the limbs.

The process of determining the cause of lameness starts with the history of the horse. Questions include what the horse is used for, when the lameness started or length of time the horse has been lame, and previous treatment or diagnosis of lameness. We also ask about medications that the horse has been treated with.

The lameness exam starts with an overall assessment of the horse's conformation and movement. We look at the horse's bone, muscle, and hoof structure. Deformities, swellings, and areas of heat are noted.

The veterinarian manually palpates horse's body to feel for heat, swelling, or pain in any of the limbs, and will also palpate the spine for any pain. The tendons of each leg are palpated to find tight, thick, or sore areas. Hoof testers are used to diagnose any foot pain.

Watching the horse's movements will determine where the lameness is stemming from, and whether the horse is lame in the front end or in the hind end. Some are very obvious, however, many are subtle. Any lameness that the horse exhibits in its natural movement is referred to as *baseline lameness*. The veterinarian looks for head bobbing, shortened or altered strides, hip dropping, and any unwillingness or obvious discomfort when moving to determine any baseline issues.

The next part of the lameness exam is the flexion and stress tests. The veterinarian accentuates the lameness by positioning the joints at the extent of the range of motion for an allotted amount of time. Should the joint be the cause of pain, the horse will often exhibit more discomfort after the joint is released.

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Regional and Local Diagnostic Analgesia (nerve or joint blocks) are often used to pinpoint the areas of pain. A region or joint is blocked and the lameness severity is evaluated and compared to baseline. If the block improves the lameness, at least a portion of the pain can be attributed to the area blocked.

Other diagnostics that we utilize here at Countryside Large Animal Veterinary Services include ultrasound, digital radiography, and needlescope arthroscopy.

Fall Promotions



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OF OCTOBER!



Meet the Staff

Brenda Greenhagen, Assistant Bookkeeper & Customer Care



Brenda grew up on a cattle ranch in Pine Bluffs, Wyoming. After graduating high school, Brenda attended Laramie County Community College, in Cheyenne, Wyoming before moving to Colorado. She has been a resident of Colorado for over 23 years. Growing up, Brenda enjoyed showing horses and participated in barrel racing. She attended the PetSmart Grooming Academy in 2011 and received her Professional Pet Grooming license. She joined the Countryside team in September 2015 as the Assistant Bookkeeper and Receptionist, bringing 30 plus years of accounting and customer service with her. Brenda spends her free time with her three children, three grandchildren, two dogs, "Sarge" and "Missy", and with her friends.