Spring 2019 News Letter

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New in Spring 2019
Dr. Stephen Angelos, DVM, DACVIM

Welcome to our Spring 2019 LAMA newsletter! Although winter is still here, we are feeling hopeful about spring, and are looking forward to the new season! Each spring we offer different specials. This year we are offering discounts on two blood panels that we think are very important: the complete blood count/blood chemistry “cbc/chem”, and the vitamin E/selenium panel. One of the reasons we think cbc/chem is so important is because it gives information about so many different body systems: red blood cells, white blood cells, electrolytes, kidney values, liver values, muscle enzymes, and blood proteins are some of the things that are reported. By knowing your horse’s baseline values, we have something to compare to later on. That allows us to treat and make recommendations with the most information.

Sometimes, we see changes in bloodwork in an otherwise healthy animal, and we can make recommendations or interventions earlier, if necessary. If your horse is on daily Equioxx or Previcox, yearly evaluation of liver and kidney values helps us know that the horse is

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Spring Specials!

- Save $20 on CBC and Chemistry bloodwork and/or Vitamin E and Selenium levels!
- 50% off physical examination at the time of vaccines.
LAMA welcomes
Dr. Gemma Gerardi

We are very excited to announce that Dr. Gemma Gerardi will be joining LAMA April 1st! We feel sure that Gemma will be a great addition to our team. She brings 9 years of experience in the field of large animal veterinary medicine and is also trained in veterinary chiropractic care.

Dr. Gerardi graduated from Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine in 2010. She then completed a year-long equine internship at Mid-Atlantic Equine Medical Center in New Jersey. Upon completion, she joined the ambulatory group at Mid-Atlantic where she worked until 2019. Throughout her career, Dr. Gerardi has worked on a wide variety of sport and pleasure horses. Her professional interests include lameness, reproduction, and preventative care (including dentistry and nutrition). Dr. Gerardi completed the Options for Animals course in animal chiropractic in 2018, and is certified by the International Veterinary Chiropractic Association. It was a love of horses and riding that drew her to the equine veterinary profession. And, she still enjoys riding and spending time with her OTTB, Arthur.

Herbal Medicine
Dr. Brady Hellman, DVM

Have you ever wondered about herbal medicine? Chinese herbs have been used to treat ailments for thousands of years. The idea behind Chinese medicine is that there is an

Did you know?

- The oldest horse is said to have lived 62 years!
- Because a horse’s eyes are located on the side of their head, they can see nearly 360 degrees.
- The stallion is not the leader of the herd; the lead mare is.
underlying imbalance of the body making it susceptible to illness or pain. When the body and all of its parts are in balance, there is health. Acupuncture and herbs are the basis for Chinese medicine. They can be used together, or separately. They can also be used alone or in addition to conventional medicine.

There are very few side effects associated with Chinese herbs. In addition, they are rarely used longer than for 6 months at a time and, often times, are only needed for 2-3 months. In other words, they are used to help put the body back into balance. Once balance has been restored, the herbs are no longer needed. Some individuals, however, will be prone to re-occurrence of certain imbalances. Therefore, in some, the herbs may need to be re-started from time to time.

In order to choose the correct herbal formula, a practitioner experienced in Chinese medicine needs to evaluate the animal in person. A thorough history is needed as well as an assessment of the animal including the appearance of the tongue and the quality of the animal’s pulse. The herbs can be added to the animal’s feed twice daily and effects are generally seen within 2 weeks. Common conditions that respond well to Chinese herbs include: laminitis, navicular syndrome, gastric ulcers, anxiety, tendon injuries, heaves, allergies, EPM, Lyme disease, and much more. Call our office if you are interested in learning how Chinese herbs might benefit your animal!

Meningeal Worm Update

Dr. Stephen Angelos, DVM, DACVIM

If you have small ruminants like sheep, goats, llamas, or alpacas you have probably heard us discuss deworming to prevent a disease called meningeal worm infection. This winter we have seen more cases of meningeal worm than in the previous three winters combined. Meningeal worm, or brain worm, is an infection of the nervous system caused by *Parelaphostrongylus tenuis*, a parasite that is host adapted to white tailed deer. In deer, it rarely causes problems. Unfortunately, when non-deer ruminants like sheep, goats, llamas, alpacas, and other non-domestic ruminants inadvertently eat the parasite while they are grazing, the parasite will migrate through nerve tissues in the spinal cord or brain and cause many different serious clinical signs. Staggering, paralysis, and hind limb weakness are just some of the signs we commonly see. Fortunately, by deworming...
every 4 to 6 weeks the parasite can be killed before it enters the spinal cord or brain. Once the parasite is inside the protected environment of the nervous system, it is much harder to kill, and even if it is killed it usually has caused damage that may be permanent.

There are currently some studies at Cornell University looking at different treatment regimens to find the method that results in the best outcome for infected animals. While there is no vaccine to prevent meningeal worm infection, there is evidence that a vaccine could protect against the parasite. Other research is looking at ways to improve the effectiveness of ivermectin at crossing into the nervous system. Currently, high doses of fenbendazole and anti-inflammatory medications, are how we treat these cases. The best way to prevent infection is to deworm susceptible livestock every 4 to 6 weeks. We generally recommend that this be done from about March 1 through January 1 but depending on the severity of freezing in the spring or fall, these dates are not fixed. Because the parasite needs an intermediate host (land snail or slug) to complete its life cycle, try to avoid pasturing livestock in areas that border woodlands, or that have low wet areas. In the fall, fallen leaves can provide additional protection to slugs and snails, so avoid these grazing areas, if possible. Other things that deter deer like guardian dogs, human activity, or deer fencing can also help. Barriers to slugs and snails are another method used by some livestock owners (stone or sand perimeters around small paddocks can help) but make sure you do not use poison to try to control these critters. The risks of toxicity from accidental exposure to small animals or livestock/wildlife is greater than the benefit. If you have any questions about meningeal worm or its prevention, please call us!

Recommended Vaccines

Dr. Brady Hellman, DVM

Every spring, your horse should be boostered in order to provide the best protection against the diseases we see most often in our region.

The “core” vaccines include:

**Eastern and Western Encephalitis:** Spread by mosquitoes, this is a neurologic disease that often results in death in unprotected horses and camelids.

**West Nile Virus:** Similar to above. Spread by mosquitoes, this is a neurologic disease that often results in death in unprotected horses and camelids.

**Rabies:** Fatal in unprotected animals. Rabies is also spread to humans and is fatal without immediate intervention. All horses and goats should be boostered yearly. Sheep should be boostered every 3rd year after two consecutive doses one year apart.
Potomac Horse Fever: This disease is very common in our region. Treatment is very effective in vaccinated animals, but less so in unprotected animals and can be fatal. Spread by snails, slugs, and aquatic insects.

Tetanus: Generally contracted through a break in the skin or a wound. The toxin responsible is found naturally in the soil. Fatal. All horses, camelids, and small ruminants should be vaccinated yearly.

Additional vaccines:

Lyme disease: Seen frequently in this region and causes a range of debilitating symptoms including lameness, lethargy, aggression, etc. This is a dog vaccine shown to be effective in horses.

Flu/Rhino: Upper respiratory and neurologic forms. Spread from horse to horse. This vaccine is recommended for horses that are boarding, showing or traveling.

Botulism: This is an often fatal disease contracted from contaminated hay. Horses fed round bales are at increased risk.

Check Out our On-line Pharmacy
Dr. Brady Hellman, DVM

You have probably noticed the emails you have been receiving regarding our on-line pharmacy. These emails contain coupons and rebate deals on many of the most popular medications and supplements for horses.

We feel that it is important to offer a safe alternative for those of you preferring to purchase medications on-line. While you might not be aware, many of the on-line retailers do not receive the medications they offer straight from the manufacturer. This leads to medications being dispensed that have not been properly stored or may even be counterfeit. Because of this, the medications may be ineffective or even dangerous to your pet. All medications on our site are straight from the manufacturer and guaranteed.

If you would prefer to not receive the emails offering discounts on our site, simply opt-out at the bottom of the email.

Did you know?

- Horses are not colorblind but are better at seeing yellows and greens than purples and violets.
- The fastest recorded sprinting speed of a horse is 55 miles per hour.
- Horses prefer to face rear when trailering.