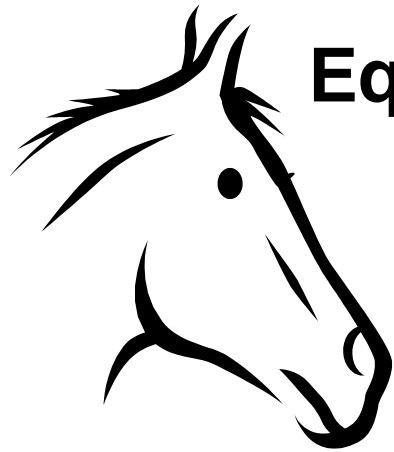


Equine Behavior & Training



Equine Science & Technology

Equine Behavior



- Modern horse breeding, feeding, and management have brought renewed interest in the behavior of horses ...
- Especially as a factor in their training, performance, and efficiency.
- Each animal species has characteristic ways of performing certain functions and rarely departs from them.
- The horse is no exception.

Equine Behavior



Horses exhibit the following behavior systems:

- Protective behavior
- Ingestive (eating and drinking) behavior
- Eliminative behavior
- Sexual behavior
- Care-giving and care-seeking behavior (mother-young) behavior
- Agonistic behavior
- Investigative behavior

Equine Behavior



Protective Behavior

- The basic behavior of modern horses reflects the years they survived as creatures of the prairies.
- Even today, horses retain their built-in environmental control ... their self protection from the elements.
- In cold weather ... they will turn their rear ends toward a storm.
- Wild horses were almost totally dependent upon flight.
 - They fought only when cornered.
- They have well-developed senses of hearing, sight, and smell to warn them of the approach of danger.

Equine Behavior



Ingestive (Eating and Drinking) Behavior

- The first ingestive behavior trait, common to all young mammals, including foals, is **suckling**.
- As the horse was transformed for the prairie, its teeth grew longer, stronger, and suited for grinding grasses.
- When snow covers the pasture or range, the horse will paw through the snow so it can reach the grass.
- Horses prefer grazing in an open area ... where they can watch for enemies.
- Horses will rarely eat the leaves of trees and shrubs provided grass is available.

Equine Behavior



Eliminative Behavior

- Horses tend to deposit their feces and urine in certain areas, and then graze in other areas.
 - Especially in small pastures, where some areas may be grazed quite closely with few droppings present
 - Other areas may not be grazed and have tall, rank grass with a greater concentration of droppings.



Equine Behavior



The defecating behavior of horses probably evolved for two reasons:

- As a means of stallions marking their areas or territories (like dogs) with urine scent posts.
- Such markings serve to warn rival stallions that they are encroaching on the territory of another stallion.
- This provides protection for horses from infestation by internal parasites.
 - Many parasites are spread from one horse to another by grazing pastures contaminated with parasite eggs from horses.

Equine Behavior



Sexual Behavior

- Sexual behavior involves courtship and mating.
- Each animal has a specific pattern of sexual behavior.
- Stallions detect females in heat by sight or smell.
- Horses tend to be seasonal breeders, with the greatest sexual activity in the spring and early summer.
- The courtship (teasing) of the stallion is characterized by:
 - Neighing
 - Smelling the genitalia of the mare
 - Extended head and curled upper lip.

Equine Behavior



Care-Giving & Care-Seeking (Mother-Young) Behavior

- The care giving behavior is by females (maternal)
- The care-seeking behavior is normal for young animals.
- This type of behavior begins at birth and extends until the young are weaned.



Equine Behavior



Care-Giving & Care-Seeking (Mother-Young) Behavior

- Mares foal away from other horses
 - To provide the foal with the opportunity to identify or imprint itself with its mother, and
 - To protect against predators.
- A mare calls for her foal with a neigh or a whinny and exhibits nervousness and distress when her young is disturbed.



Equine Behavior



Agonistic Behavior

- Agonistic behavior includes fighting and flight.
- Among farm mammals, males fight more than females.
- Stallions that run together from a young age seldom fight.
- Stallions fight by biting, kicking, and striking.
 - The fight head to head with most of the biting on the neck, shoulders, and front legs.

Equine Behavior



Investigative Behavior

- Investigative behavior is closely related to fear-to self protective behavior.
- All animals are curious and explore their environment.
- Investigation takes place through seeing, hearing, smelling, testing, and touching.
- Whenever an animal is introduced into a new area (stall, paddock, or pasture) its first reaction is to explore it.

Equine Behavior



Safe Handling of Horses

- Communication of rider to horse is accomplished through
 - Voice,
 - Legs, and
 - Hands
- Voice cues for starting / stopping are easy to give and easily understood by the horse.
- Rein cues are more complex for both rider and horse, and signify more complex maneuvers

Equine Behavior



Safe Handling of Horses

- Leg cues are needed for most complex responses, such as rollbacks.
- Horses are equally sensitive to insecurity or confidence in their riders, and respond accordingly.
- If the rider lacks assurance, the horse will feel insecure and perform below its capability.

Equine Behavior



Imprinting

- At the time of birth, a newborn foal will follow any moving object, including a human.
- If other horses are present, a foal may follow a mare other than its own mother.
- The use of the term imprinting is also used to refer to a form of socialization training given to a foal early in life.
- At birth, a mare identifies her foal partly by odor.
- As the foal grows older, recognition by sight and sound becomes more important.

Equine Behavior



Abnormal Horse Behavior

- Domestication and confinement of horses have spawned many abnormal behaviors.
- Horses have more abnormal behaviors than any other species,
 - Not because they are naturally bad,
 - But because there are many spoiled horses
 - Horses that have received too much TLC and too little discipline.



Equine Behavior



Barn Sour

- A horse with this behavior refuses to leave the barn, to leave home, friends, security, and feed.
- There are no easy cures for barn-sour horses.
- One suggested treatment consists of giving a bit of feed along the trail, with the feed given farther and farther from the barn.

Equine Behavior



Bolting Feed

- Bolting feed is the name given to the habit of eating too fast (gulping the feed down without chewing).
- This condition can be controlled by spreading the concentrate thinly over the bottom of the grain box.
- Large round stones can also be placed in the feedbox.



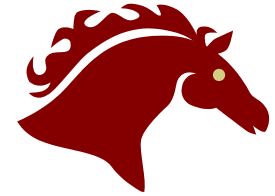
Equine Behavior



Cribbing

- Biting or setting the teeth against some object, such as the manger or a post, while sucking air is known as a cribber.
- A cribber is more subject to colic.
- The common remedy for a cribber is a cribbing strap buckled around the neck in such a way that it will compress the larynx when the head is flexed but not cause any discomfort when not cribbing.
- A surgical procedure to relieve cribbing has been developed and used with some success.

Equine Behavior



Halter Pulling

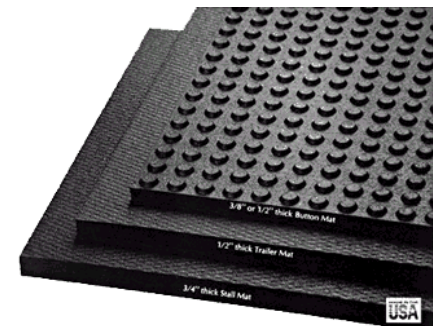
- A confirmed halter puller breaks halters and lead ropes as it pulls back, then escapes.
- Break the habit by
 - Tie a strong rope that the horse cannot break around the throatlatch, using a bowline knot so that the rope cannot slip and choke the horse, or
 - Tie a strong rope around the chest just back of the withers, using a bowline knot.

Equine Behavior



Pawing

- This refers to the horse's digging at the stall floor with its front feet.
- Heavy rubber mats on the stall floor and under the bedding will discourage this.



Equine Behavior



Shying

- Shying at unfamiliar objects makes a horse dangerous to ride.
- The only solution is to take the horse patiently and gently over new trails and into new surroundings.
- Do so again and again until there is no more shyness.

Equine Behavior



Tail Rubbing

- This is persistent rubbing of the tail against the side of the stall or other objects, resulting in the loss of hair and in an unsightly tail.
- The presence of parasites may cause this.
- Installation of a tail board, which is a 2" X 12" shelf that runs around the stall at a height just above the point of the horse's buttock.

Equine Behavior



Loading and Hauling a Horse

- In loading and unloading a horse, always be patient and never show anger.
- Try kindness first;
 - Pat the horse and speak to it to reassure it.
- If this fails, it may be necessary to use one of the following techniques:
- Sometimes, the use of a twitch at the right time is desirable, especially if the horse is tossing its head about.

Equine Behavior



Loading and Hauling a Horse

- When a horse must be disciplined, a short rubber hose can be used effectively by making a lot of noise without inflicting much pain.
- A nervous, excitable horse may be calmed by a tranquilizer, which should be administered by a veterinarian.
- If a horse will not move or is kicking, grab its tail and push it over its back.
 - In this position, it is difficult for the horse to kick, but it can be pushed along.

Equine Behavior



Trailer Safety

- Provide good footing.
 - The floor of the trailer should be covered.
- Clean the floor frequently.
- Provide plenty of fresh air without drafts.
- Tie horses appropriately.
 - Use a cotton or nylon rope.
 - Be sure to tie a horse short so that it cannot place a leg over or get its head under the rope.