

Problem Hooves

by Judy Sinner, Gold Director, WA

Put on your Dick Tracy hat and find out everything you can about the horse's total diet, including any mineralized block or salt licks, worming schedule, housing conditions, and shoeing. The bottom line is that a healthy horse has healthy hooves, so we need to figure out why the horse is not healthy and what is contributing to the condition.

Horses with poor hooves should not be fed brans, and that includes both wheat and rice. The top-heavy phosphorous level and phytates tie up calcium and zinc, and brittle feet are often a symptom of calcium and zinc deficiency. Likewise a straight alfalfa diet actually inhibits calcium absorption.

Inorganic minerals in many pasture blocks are often treated like toxins in the body, along with heavy metals in the water supply, pesticides and herbicides on the feeds, chemical fly sprays, etc. Since the liver is the filter for the body, it becomes overloaded and stressed and brittle hooves can be one result. Ideally, you are feeding our **Pelleted Grain Ration™** which is chemical-free, using **Dyna-Shield™** instead of toxic fly sprays, and checking with your hay grower to make sure he is not saturating your feed with chemicals.

Donna Starita, DVM, recommends a quarterly liver detoxification program for horses (and dogs!) and our **Herbal Tonic™** does a great job. The autumn solstice and the full moon provide an ideal window of opportunity to do some cleanup before going into the colder weather and accompanying stresses.

What on earth does worming have to do with crummy feet, you may ask. Experience in handling "problem hoof" throughout the years supports the observation that overuse of wormers contributes significantly to bad hooves and white line disease, and often to hypothyroidism and abscesses or even founder. Frequent worming is the common denominator.

The results of a study reported in the March, 1987, issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine* deals with low thyroid, and states that "only 18 percent of the total circulating T3 hormone is produced in the thyroid, while 82 percent comes from...conversions of T4 to T3 in tissues other than the thyroid gland." The primary organ for this conversion is thought to be the liver.

What this means in plain English is that toxic liver causes a reduced ability to convert thyroid hormone to the active form which then leads to classic hypothyroid symptoms, one of which is dry, scaly skin and brittle hooves or nails. Incidentally, the T3 form of thyroid hormone is far more active than T4 - thyroxine - and yet T4 as a synthetic is the form prescribed by most doctors and veterinarians.

Horses which are severely hypothyroid are under such metabolic stress that they may founder or experience separation of the white line, which can lead to seedy toe or white line disease. Often your farrier can tell you when you have wormed horses recently by the blood and little separations evident in the white line. Worming and vaccinations are metabolic stressors.

Pliable, healthy hooves require fat in the diet (not oil) and **H.E.S.™** or **Pelleted Grain Ration™** is a great source.

Supplemental zinc is also important. **Dyna Hoof™** contains zinc and other minerals as "chelazones." That means they are targeted to hoof tissue by binding them to the amino acids most prevalent in the hoof, so the body gives that tissue priority mail service. Chelazones are the next step above and beyond even our patented low weight chelated minerals, and they are the real reason to feed **Dyna Hoof™** instead of other hoof supplements on the market.

Biotin, a B vitamin, and methionine, an amino acid, seem to be the big buzzwords in hoof supplements and of course **Dyna Hoof™** does contain those as well. However, according to Kempson, S.A., 1987, only 5 percent of horses with poor quality horn respond to biotin supplementation. So zinc is the real key here, and we have 4,273 mg. of chelated zinc in our product.

One tip regarding the use of **Dyna Hoof™**. You will have customers who want to jump over the basics and feed only **Dyna Hoof™**. Like all of our specialty products, **Dyna Hoof™** is formulated on the assumption that the horse is also receiving **Dynamite®** or **Dynamite® Plus™** or **TNT™**. **Dyna Hoof™** is not necessary 90 percent of the time; let's not just use a band-aid, let's help the customer find out why the horse has unhealthy feet.

If **Dyna Hoof™** is needed for founder, abscesses, quarter-cracks or the like, usually just one container will jump start the feet and then all is well. Very occasionally, we will see a horse that needs a small maintenance dose of **Dyna Hoof™**, perhaps 1/3 ounce daily along with his regular **Dynamite®** program.

Other factors contributing to poor feet include emotional stress and poor teeth which hinder digestion; unbalanced shoeing which comprises the energy meridians in the feet and affects organ systems; negative earth energies and proximity to power lines; inadequate exercise. So, bottom line, don't just sell **Dyna Hoof™** without asking a lot of questions and imparting lots of information.

At **DYNAMITE®**, a motto is "To Serve, not just to sell." Sharing information creates a true relationship with your client, and the possibility of a long-term relationship that can ripple out to help many horses and owners.

