

# Delmarva Equine Clinic Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 2

www.delmarva-equine.com

Spring 2010



## First Tuesday Series

New Bolton Center is now holding a free monthly series for horse owners & enthusiasts. It is held the first Tuesday of every month, 6:30-7:30pm in the Woerner Amphitheater at New Bolton Center. For upcoming topics, go to <http://www.vet.upenn.edu/FirstTuesdays>. RSVP to Patricia Hall at 610-925-6500 or [phall@vet.upenn.edu](mailto:phall@vet.upenn.edu).

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## Acupuncture in Animals

Meryl Kern, DVM

Veterinary acupuncture can be traced back to the Shang Dynasty in the 16<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Acupuncture first gained significant attention in the United States in 1972. A reporter, James Reston, traveling with President Nixon to China had to receive an emergency appendectomy while there. He was so impressed with the pain relief he received with acupuncture after the operation that he wrote an article on it afterwards. In 1997, the NIH formally recognized acupuncture as a mainstream medicine healing option. The US Army trains medics in acupuncture for pain relief for use in battle or major disasters. Forty Department of Defense doctors are licensed acupuncturists.

The ancient Chinese believed that Qi (pronounced chee) flowed through the body maintaining a balance. Any blockage in the flow of Qi is what creates pain and disease. Thus the idea of acupuncture is to stimulate points that allow the flow of Qi to be re-established. Or to those of us that the idea of Qi seems a little far fetched, abnormal blood flow and nerve conduction in an area of the body will similarly cause pain and disease.

Acupuncture points are located in areas where there are many nerve endings and small blood vessels. Stimulation of these points causes the release of endorphins, serotonin and other neurotransmitters. People describe the sensation of an acupuncture needle as tingling, swelling, or a sense of heaviness. Animals often show a twitch of skin upon insertion of the needle. Most animals don't mind the treatment and many will even fall asleep.

Acupuncture needles are thin stainless steel needles. In addition to a "dry needle", acupoints may be stimulated with a small amount of a liquid B vitamin or sarapin. Electroacupuncture – a small electrical current – and moxibustion – to warm the needle and thus the acupoint may also be used depending on the problem being treated. Herbal medicines may also be used to augment therapy. Combined therapy is often the most effective. In addition lower dosages of your pets current medications may be needed, lowering the chance of side effects.

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Sessions may last from 20 minutes to an hour. A minimum of three weekly treatments are recommended to assess response to therapy. Some problems will respond with one treatment alone and other long-standing problems may require additional treatments or maintenance therapy (i.e once monthly). A plan tailored to your particular animal and what problem is being treated will be made at the initial consultation.

How do you decide if acupuncture is right for your animal? There are a number of ailments that acupuncture can help. The most well known use for acupuncture is for pain control. It is excellent for muscle soreness, back pain, and arthritis. However it also treats a variety of gastrointestinal, kidney, skin, respiratory, and neurologic conditions. In fact animals that have been partially paralyzed can regain a greater degree of use of their limbs and faster with acupuncture than with medication.

Dog and cat ailments: hip dysplasia, arthritis, kidney failure, nausea and inappetance (commonly used in people cancer patients that get nauseous due to chemo), diarrhea, fever, eye problems including ulcers, infertility, seizures, IBD, UTI, resuscitation, nerve problems and paralysis, disc disease, constipation.

Horse ailments: lameness, compensatory soreness, arthritis, fever, eye problems including ulcers, infertility, stomach ulcers, head shaking, TMJ, chronic diarrhea, retained placenta, anhydrosis, laryngeal paralysis, laminitis, navicular, colic.

For racehorses and other performance horses: hock pain, stifle pain, hip pain, shoulder pain, neck pain, back pain, knee pain, and foot pain! Also, calming, thumps, throat inflammation, lung infection, throat problems, EPM, anemia, immune stimulation, and relaxing the muscles after a chiropractic adjustment.

We are pleased to announce that we now offer acupuncture and herbal therapy for cats, dogs, and horses. Dr. Meryl Kern has just completed the International Veterinary Acupuncture Society (IVAS) course. If you are interested in setting up a session please call us at (302) 734-5588 for your dogs and cats or at (302) 735-4735 for your horses!



## Racing at Harrah's Chester...

*Ashlie Wilkerson*

In case you are still planning on racing at Chester, there are a couple of things you should know...

- 1) You must have a 2010 coggins.
- 2) Your horse must have a rabies vaccine and EHV vaccine along with a vaccine certificate.
- 3) A health certificate within 10 days of dropping in.

If you still need the above information set up an appointment today, just call 735-4735.

Just a reminder: With all the rain we have received in the last couple months **mosquitoes** are going to be really bad. Please have your horses vaccinated for **West Nile Virus and Eastern and Western encephalitis**.