

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2024

Virginia Dressage Association Charlottesville Chapter

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Isabel F. de Szinay Memorial
Dressage Show

15 - 16 June 2024

HITS Commonwealth Horse Park,
Culpeper, VA

Opening Daste: 5 May 2024

Closing Date: 5 June 2024

Breed Component
USDFBCS Qualifying Competition

Performance Classes

Sponsorship

Volunteer

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy Spring Everyone! Since this is the May/June Newsletter, perhaps I should be saying "Happy Summer 'Cause It's Gonna Be Here Soon."

I am so impressed with our members working to get Sponsorships for the recognized show in June, volunteering for that show, and simply being present when this Club needs it! However, we can't rest on our laurels yet, as we do need more financial support for this show. Please continue your efforts to gain sponsorship monies.

Most importantly, I want to recognize our Educational Committee headed by Nancy Doody and members, Sandy Worley, Erin Fitzwater, Nancy Lowey, Laura Berne, and myself. More information is coming on those clinics, but get ready to have your boots knocked off! Our first Educational Clinic with Greber Dressage was a huge success, not necessarily in numbers, but in learning which is the emphasis of this Committee.

Let's wrap up the recognized show, support our members who will be showing in that show, and enjoy the company of a well-oiled machine!

Eleszabeth



2024 Chapter Membership
(as of 5/9/24)

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Bettinna Longaker | Laura Berne |
| Jeremey Fox | Shaleena Arreguin |
| Nancy Doody | Sandy Worley |
| Beth Sproule | Anne Chapin |
| Taska Parker | Flavia Anger |
| Peta Wyllie | Halley Bell |
| Nancy Lowey | Helle Stewart |
| Jeri Tate | Kim Schmidt |
| Nicky Vogel | Hannah Schmidt |
| Roxanne Hagan | Melissa Wimmer |
| Robin Dannels | Sophia Bryant |
| Lisa Macchi | Katherine Innes |
| Susan Laurie | Darla Fainter |
| Sandi Nelson | Karen Fox |
| Donna Martin | Laurel Moore |
| Jillian Kirkpatrick | Hannah Parker |
| Carol Bauer | Ellen Hudgins |
| Wendy Owens | Bruno Greber |
| Melyni Worth | Barbara Greber |
| Sabine Desper | Bettina Anderson |
| Malinda Zielke | Sandra Gaylinn |
| Kim Aust | Brent Pusey |
| Gardy Bloemers | Angela Doolan |
| April Rivers | Tamara Showalter |
| Isabella Rice | Joyce Howear |
| Molly Bull | Kerry-lynn Corry |
| Nancy Olson | Krisine Gillis |
| Sarah Olson | Carolyn Briggs |
| George Williams | Michelle Foss |
| Roberta Williams | |
| Eleszabeth McNeel | |
| Erin Fitzwater | |
| Kathleen Gruss | |
| Michelle Anderson | |
| Celia Refalko | |
| Karen Rice | |

UPCOMING EVENTS

Connections - Meet and Mingle at Eastwood Farm and Winery

19 June 2024

5:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Let's connect with members! Develop existing relationships or create new connections at Eastwood Farm and Winery on 16 June, 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm. Bring your friends and sufficient others.

RSVP - by 14 June to Nancy Doody at ndoody15@gmail.com.

Hope to see everyone!



Paint and Sip Event

The VADA-CH Educational Events Committee is planning a Paint and Sip event in late October. Stay tune for more details.



Isabel F. de Szinay Memorial Dressage Show

15-16 June 2024

Commonwealth Horse Park, Culpeper, VA

Opening Date: 5 May 2024
Closing Date: 5 June 2024

PRIZE LIST

ONLINE ENTRIES -
[HORSESHOWOFFICE.COM](https://www.horshowoffice.com)

VADA Charlottesville is hosting "Isabel F. de Szinay Memorial Dressage Show" on 15 and 16 June at Commonwealth Park, Culpeper, VA. Once again, we will have the breed show component on Saturday, 15 June. It will be a qualifier for the ProElite/USDF Breeders Championship East Coast Series. Performance classes will run on Saturday and Sunday.

Last year the footing at the Commonwealth Park facility had a much-needed renovation. The footing was completely replaced with high tech materials in most of the arenas. We think this is a major improvement! HITS has refreshed/upgraded the showgrounds. We think you will enjoy your experience there this year.

Our judges are Natalie Lamping, Jennifer Roth, Susan Graham White, and Margaret Freeman. Our Technical Delegate is Sheli King.

SPONSORSHIP

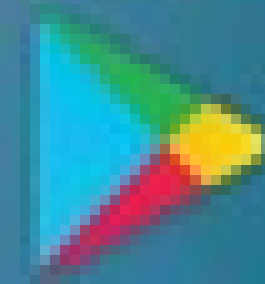
VADA CH invites you to consider supporting the show by becoming a sponsor! We are offering levels of sponsorship opportunities from Sponsorship Bundles, Individual Class Sponsor, and Advertising on the showgrounds and in the digital show program. To discuss sponsorship, reach out to Eleszabeth McNeel at e7aquila@aol.com.

**To Learn More About
Sponsorship**





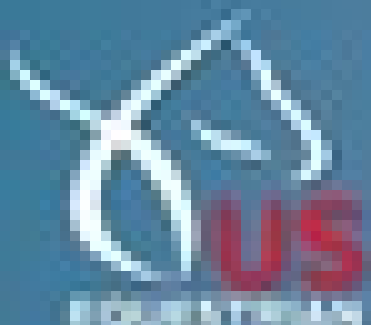
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USEF RULE CHANGES THAT AFFECT DRESSAGE COMPETITIONS EFFECTIVE 12/1/2023 By Lori LaFave and Michelle King

As a competitor, one of the biggest changes you will notice when you go to a show this year is the way equipment checks will be handled. There will still be a ring steward stationed ringside who will check the equipment of 1/3 of the riders in each class (unless it is a regional championship, in which case, every horse will be checked.) However, the steward will now check everything EXCEPT your bit and bridle.

Effective 12/1/2024, bits and bridles will be checked by the technical delegate (TD) and not the ring steward. DR126 spells out the new procedures and it is strongly recommended that all competitors read this rule, along with all other rules that were amended or added this year (which will be easy to spot as they are printed in red in the Rule Book.) TDs will check 50% of the horse/rider combinations entered at the show. Most of these checks will be conducted when the equipment is off the horse, in a variety of ways. You may be asked to show the TD your bit and bridle when they are walking through the barns doing their daily (or more frequent) barn checks, as they walk around the trailer parking area or be asked to bring them with you when you check in at the show office or perhaps to the warm up area the day before the show begins if the TD is there on warm up day. In addition, the TD will check some horses after their test in much the same way as the traditional check previously performed by the stewards. This will be the check to ensure that the bit and bridle shown to the TD is actually the bit and bridle being used by the competitor. The TD for the show will work with the show management to determine the process that will work best for each particular show and that information will be provided to the competitors before the show. And remember, TDs are at the show as a resource to both competition management and competitors, so if you have a question about your equipment (or anything else show related) feel free to reach out to the TD, who will be listed in the prize list and ask them!

Below are more rule changes for this season, that might affect you directly (this is NOT the full list of changes), please refer to the USEF Rulebook for any questions or for a longer explanation of each rule.

Category	Rule No.	Summary...please see rule book for full text / exceptions!
Comp Mgt	GR821.2e DR126.4	Dressage Level 1-3 competitions may offer Eventing Opportunity Classes . Dressage Level 4-5 competitions may not offer Opportunity Classes
Comp Mgt	GR848.6	Competitor's Return to Competition release may now be signed by licensed physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner .
Comp Mgt / Officials	GR1040.1	A judge's horse may now compete in any Dressage class unless he/she is judging that class. (Previously had to compete H.C.)
Comp Mgt	GR1101.1	All horses entered must have a USEF Horse ID . Recording/ registration number issued by Federation Recognized Discipline Affiliate such as USDF are no longer sufficient for USEF's purposes
Comp Mgt	GR1101.10	Effective December 1, 2025 , all horses competing at Federation Licensed and Endorsed Competitions must provide a microchip number that verifies the animal.
Comp Mgt	GR1212	Prize lists may now only be submitted electronically, not via mail.
Comp Mgt	GR1214.1	Competition results for each class must now include name and USEF number of judge(s).
Comp Mgt	GR1215.4	For six consecutive hours overnight, stabling must have minimal lighting and noise to allow stabled horses to rest adequately.
Comp Mgt	GR1215.7	All permanent barn structures and temporary stabling must have clearly visible identification, such as numbers, letters, or names.
Comp Mgt/TD	GR1304.8	Permission to approach a judge regarding a decision may only be granted by the Steward / TD (no longer by Show Committee or Competition management); Steward/TD shall be present for the meeting.
TD	DR120.4.1	If spurs are worn, a separate spur must be worn on each boot.
Comp Mgt / TDs Competitors	DR121.19	Numbers. Competitors may use their own numbers for schooling (and competition) but they can't skip check-in just because they don't need to pick up a number. Failure to check in at the show office prior to schooling will result in the issuance of a Warning Card.
Officials	DR123.8	Video tape or any other kind of digital/electronic media replay may not be used to dispute a judge's decision.
Comp Mgt	DR129.6d	If there is a problem with their freestyle music , rider should immediately approach judge at "C" to discuss options for restarting the test.
Comp Mgt	DR129.9	Clarifies that 63% is the minimum qualifying score for any national level freestyle , even if an FEI test is ridden as the qualifier
Comp Mgt	DR129.9e & .9f	A qualifying score is not required to enter FEI Pony Rider, FEI Junior, and FEI Young Rider Freestyles, nor for a horse/rider combination competing in the U25 division to ride a GP Freestyle.

Lunging and Long Lining Clinic with Bruno Greber

April 13, 2024



The first of our education sessions for the year (2024) was a success in many ways. Two people (Laura Berne and Teresa Stanley) brought their horses to the clinic. Bruno worked in the round pen for both sessions due to the blustery winds that would part the hair on a porcupine!

Nine auditors bared the wind and stood on a platform around one side of the round pen on the outside. We even used chairs and tables to stand on to create more viewing opportunities.

Along with working with the horse, Bruno also explained the whys and why nots of Long Lining. This process can be an integral part of a training program for young or older horses as well. Long Lining allows the person on the ground to communicate with the horse in ways similar to being in the saddle. The contact from the ground is transferred to the horse's mouth in the same manner as being on their back but working from the ground allows the person to observe the horse, make changes, and to correct any issues.

Following the round pen demonstration, we adjourned to the indoor viewing area for a Q&A with Bruno.

Big thanks to Bruno and Barbara for presenting such a wonderful learning experience!





My two four-year-olds enjoying their sand bed in Aiken. Karen rice

Disrupting Comfort Zones

By Karen Rice

My 30-year career with the federal government allowed little time to devote to training my one or two dressage horses over the years. I managed to fit in a weekly lesson and a few shows per year. I wanted more—more lessons, more show opportunities, and especially more advanced training. I anticipated retiring at the end of 2023 and had been accumulating horses, ranging in age from three to eight. My retirement date was set for December 29th. Then what? Some people would go on a cruise. Others might tour a foreign country. Some would stay at home and claim to devote more time to family, projects, and hobbies. I chose a horse vacation. It took a little effort to convince my husband, John, but he came around, and we started planning a trip for January and February 2024. Where should we go?

We chose Aiken, South Carolina for several reasons. One, it's farther south than our central Virginia location, and theoretically would have better winter weather. Two, we learned of an awesome facility named Stable View (<https://stableviewfarm.com/>) and were fortunate enough to secure a spot for ourselves and the horses. Most importantly, three, wintering in South Carolina is somewhat more affordable than Florida.

A lump-sum payout for my unused annual leave helped fund the trip. John and I packed up our dog and four horses and all their paraphernalia, plus some clothes and household goods for us, over New Year's weekend—no staying up to midnight for us! The shipper arrived at 8:30 a.m. on January 2nd, and we loaded the four horses. Hiring a commercial shipper to transport the horses to Aiken and back alleviated a lot of my anxiety and freed up our two-horse trailer to transport equipment.

It was, at best, a 7-1/2-hour drive. We were meeting my trainer, Roberta Dascoli, with her own 4-year-old, and a 5-year-old owned by another client. When we arrived, we unloaded the horses, got them settled into their quarters, then unloaded household goods into our Airbnb, which we shared with Roberta and her dog. Quite a long day!

The next morning, I discovered just how much work this “vacation” was going to be. It was about a five-minute walk from our cottage to the barn. Although our private turnout paddocks were some of the closest to the barn that the horses were in, it was still about a 5-minute walk to turn them out. The paddocks were much smaller than the pastures at home, where I don’t worry about manure accumulation. A 1,000-pound horse produces about 50 pounds of manure a day. Obviously manure quickly becomes a problem in small paddocks. Four horses, 50 pounds per horse...the math is simple, but moving that much weight every day was not. We brought the horses into the barn to eat breakfast, then went out and picked paddocks. We pushed (or dragged—it alternated, depending on our exhaustion level) our wheelbarrows to a trailer near the barn to dump the manure. A steep wooden ramp had to be navigated to get into the trailer to dump our loads. On rainy or frosty mornings, dealing with the ramp was less than fun. Fortunately, the manure trailer was hauled away and dumped daily.

After picking paddocks and putting out hay, we turned the horses out, went into the cottage for breakfast and planned our day. Evenings required bringing the horses in to eat, going out to pick the paddocks again, turning the horses out with hay, and returning to the cottage for dinner. John was a wonderful shopper, and Roberta and I took turns with meal preparation. We enjoyed dinner with laughs and rehashing the day’s trials and tribulations. When we could no longer keep our eyes open, we forced ourselves to make one more trip outside to do night check, deliver hay, and walk dogs, all the while hoping for more progress with the horses the next day.

Stable View is a lovely facility with a gigantic, covered arena, five outdoor arenas, and a sixth outdoor arena being built—all with Attwood footing. There is a cross-country schooling area, a cross-country course, and 850 acres of preserved land with trails. There are three main barns and a temporary barn, plus a huge number of temporary stables for the influx of horses for shows. In addition, a “Healing Center” was being built while we were there, so there was no way to escape construction activity and vehicles.

Our stay at Stable View overlapped with that of international eventer Boyd Martin. Boyd had his own barn with a large entourage of working students. They went out in groups of two or three to do the horses’ trot sets. Everyone we met there was friendly, and all the horses were immaculately cared for. A lovely surprise was running into fellow VADACH members Anne Chapin and Eleszabeth McNeel at Stable View. What a wonderful small world!

Our horses’ paddocks were situated on the main driveway to enter the facility. There were bicycles and golf carts and gators and cars and small trucks and regular trucks and horse trailers of all sizes and campers and larger campers and tractors and other large equipment (cranes, bull dozers, cement mixers, flat-bed trailers with loads of pipes or lumber) moving around constantly. The horses had no choice but to learn to cope with the activity. After a few days of the onslaught, they did not even bother to lift their heads, much less react to passing construction equipment.

We settled into a routine of working six horses a day, whether it be hand walking, lunging, riding, or a combination. The covered arena had large green sun canvases on one side of it, which—of course—flapped in the wind. Employees were everywhere, emptying trash cans, shaking plastic trash bags in the wind to open them, installing amplifiers, moving cross-country jumps, raking debris, dragging arenas, emptying muck buckets—you name it, they were doing it. Riders were hacking about, some galloping and jumping in the cross-country schooling area, others doing trot sets, still others schooling stadium jumps. Everywhere the horses (and we) looked, there was something to get upset about. We kept telling ourselves that we wanted this activity and had willingly paid for it. Human and equine comfort zones were sufficiently disrupted.



The sandy environment supports several varieties of pine trees, which shed abundant pinecones. We were told that horses need to be cleaned out once a month with “Sand Clear,” a product to prevent sand colic. All the horses found the taste palatable, except for one of my 4-year-olds, who acted as if I was trying to poison him. The sand dried out quickly, because it was so well drained and because of the nearly non-stop wind. We found the horses got quite dusty, instead of caked in mud, as they would have been at home in Virginia.

Watching the elaborate construction of the new 300-by 217-foot arena was fascinating. Every day, the already enormous pile of sand grew ever taller and wider. If you didn’t use the surroundings for scale and just looked at the sand mountain against the sky, it looked like Mount Everest with snow (white sand) blowing off the peak. A Bobcat driver must have felt challenged to see how far up the sand mountain he could go. He went so high that it looked like the Bobcat was going to flip over backwards, which, much to our relief, didn’t happen.

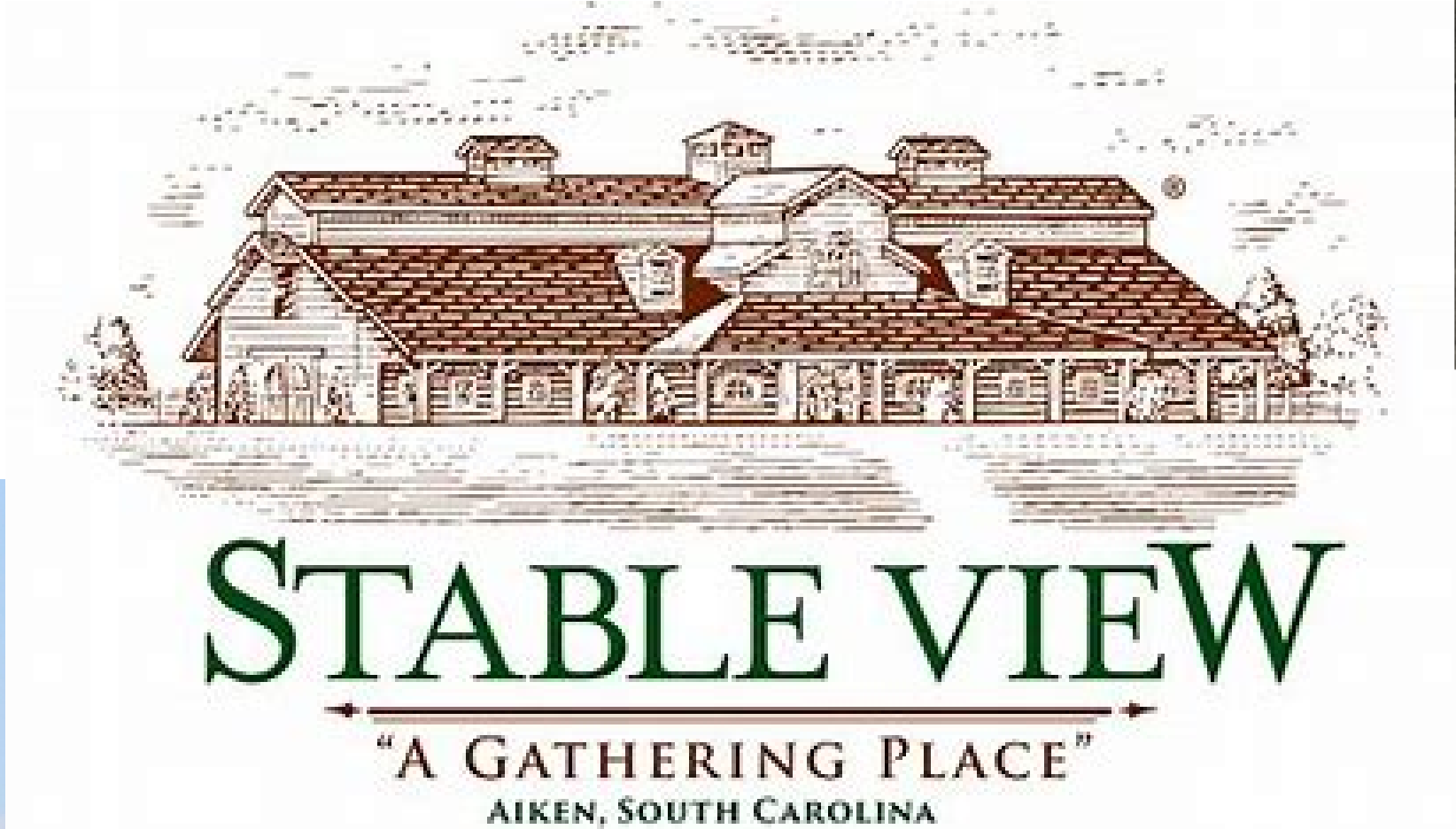
My most terrifying experience was when I was riding in an arena adjacent to the new one when it was almost completed. A water truck entered the arena with the newly laid footing and started watering. The truck left, refilled, came back a second time, and then a third time. At one point, the water truck came up the entrance ramp of my arena, looking like it was coming in to join us. I wasn’t ready to do a pas-de-deux with a water truck. Even though I was quite alarmed, my 4-year-old, the “suspicious” horse that thought that I was poisoning him with Sand Clear, was unphased. This lack of reaction would have been impossible prior to all the training and desensitization over the previous few weeks. I was truly amazed that such a “looky” horse could change in such a positive way.

Roberta experienced her own training challenges. She was riding one of my 4-year-olds in an outdoor arena, when, without warning, the automatic waterers came on, making a noise that a dinosaur might have made. These are not ordinary waterers; they are under sufficiently high pressure that they shoot the water at least 100 feet into the air. She was able to navigate the horse through the water gauntlet. Another day, she was working with my 3-year-old at the mounting block and asking him to line up by moving his hindquarters toward the block. He was standing there quietly and beautifully lined up. Just as she was about to put her left foot in the stirrup, a man emerged from a port-a-potty behind them, allowing the door to slam. The horse shot away from the mounting block as if he had received an electric shock. Roberta stood there in shock herself, foot still dangling in the air, wondering how a horse could disappear so fast. She watched the horse gallop away to join some horses near the cross-country course. He galloped through a roped off area, jumping the ropes going in and out. Some eventers caught him and told us that we were squandering a potentially legendary event horse by trying to make him into a dressage horse.

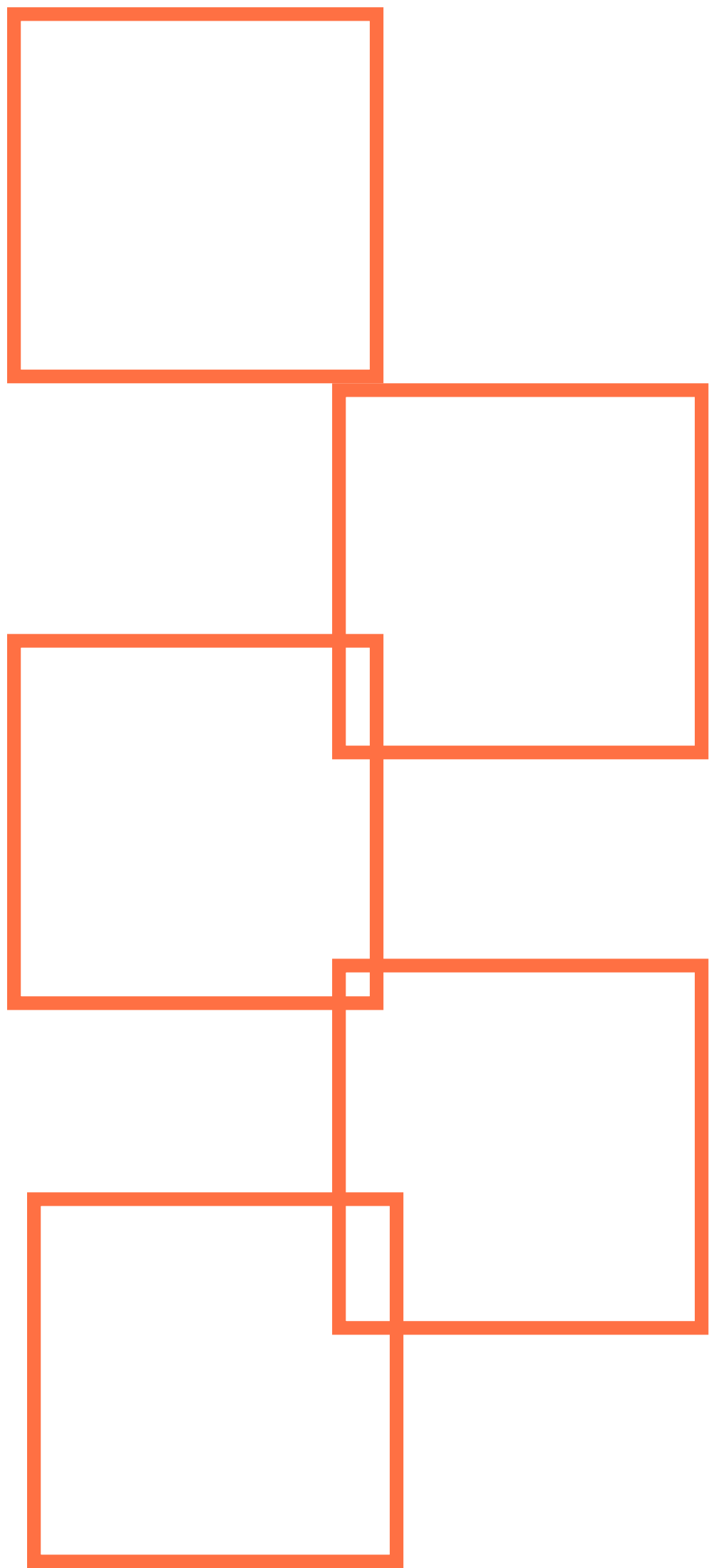
The daily grind became grueling. I fantasized about “borrowing” a working student or two. While dragging the overloaded wheelbarrow, I kept thinking this might have been what it was like in the gulag, or at least boot camp. My average daily walking distance had increased from my normal five miles to eight, not including distance covered on horseback. No wonder I was exhausted every night. Even though I am in fairly good shape, this new intensity of work disrupted my physical comfort zone.

Despite the wind and construction activity and manure-dumping hazards and exhaustion, we made progress with training the horses. Roberta showed my 3-year-old in a schooling show and one of my 4-year-olds in a recognized show. I showed the “suspicious” 4-year-old in a schooling show. At dinner after show days, we celebrated our successes with good food and the clinking of wine glasses. The countless hours of desensitizing the horses were starting to pay off.

After a fantastic and exhausting two months of living in the South Carolina chaos, it seems that our horses became much better versions of their Virginia selves. The benefits of the horses learning to cope with non-stop activity are emerging. We are safely back home now, and the training continues. If they even think about spooking at something, all I have to say is, “Don’t make me take you back to Aiken.”



DULCIBELLA-15.2 Westfalen mare by Disconto, coming 10 yrs., chestnut. Bella has excellent gaits, a super work ethic, and is a big mover in a small package. Acquired by her current amateur owner when just turning 4, she was brought along carefully with an emphasis on correct basics. Has competed successfully at licensed shows at Training through Second Levels and is showing excellent potential to move up. This sweet and talented mare deserves an able partner to further what promises to be a very long and successful dressage career. X-rays available. Please call 540-273-1740.





SHOULD YOU FEED YOUR HORSE AT GROUND LEVEL? WHY EQUINES SHOULD EAT OFF THE GROUND MELYNİ WORTH, PH.D

Should You Feed Your Horse at Ground Level? Why Equines Should Eat Off the Ground

Horse owners often spend countless hours pondering the best care possible for their equine companions. From the type of feed your horse should consume to the methods of feeding, every decision impacts their health and well-being. One such critical decision is the feeding position, which plays a significant role in supporting the horse's natural behavior, health, and digestion.

Behavior and Grazing Position

Horses in the wild graze for the majority of the day, consuming small amounts of food almost continuously. This behavior can be traced back to their evolution, which has designed them to eat small mouthfuls of forage, primarily grass, in a head-down position. When a horse is able to graze naturally, this encourages the necessary salivation that aids the digestive process and reduces the risk of colic. The natural grazing position also allows horses to remain in an alert and tense mental state, ready to move their head and neck forward and back without restriction, reducing the risk of choke and colic.

Horses graze with their heads down because this body position allows for easy breathing while minimizing the inhalation of dust and particles that can lead to respiratory issues. Feeding from the ground also mimics the natural horse eating behavior, helping to maintain a healthy and regular wear pattern on a horse's teeth, further reducing the risk of choke and colic.

Reasons to Feed Your Horse on the Ground

Given their evolution, horses are naturally designed to eat from the ground. While it might seem convenient to use high hay racks or feeders that keep feed off the ground, doing so can potentially alter a horse's posture, increase a horse's risk of developing respiratory issues due to the inhalation of dust, and can also lead to digestive health concerns such as colic.

Feeding at ground level mimics the horse's natural body position while grazing. It allows horses to eat with their head and neck at a lower, more comfortable position which prevents particles from being inhaled into the nostril and respiratory system. Feeding can also keep the horse alert and reduce the risk of choke, a condition where food becomes lodged in the horse's esophagus.

Benefits of Ground Level Feeders and Hay Nets

Ground level feeding does not mean simply scattering your horse's ration of hay and grain directly on the ground. While this practice can simulate the horse's natural grazing behavior, it can also increase the risk of sand colic, a condition where the horse consumes too much dirt or sand along with their food, leading to digestive blockages. It can also lead to ingestion of intestinal parasites or consumption of moldy hay.

Instead, consider using ground level feeders or hay nets, designed to keep hay clean and minimize waste. These feeders and nets can keep the horse's hay off the ground, reducing the ingestion of dust and particles while still allowing the horse to eat from a ground level position.

Number of Horses, Paddock Size, and Feeding Habits

Ground level feeding can also foster healthy equine behavior when a number of horses are fed together. By spreading out piles of hay at various points in a paddock or pasture, you can mimic the horse's natural behavior of moving around to various patches of grass. This can prevent squabbles over food and allow for more movement, mimicking their natural behavior in the wild.

Adapting Ground Feeding for the Older Horse

While ground level feeding has its benefits, it's important to adapt these principles to each individual horse. Older horses may find it challenging to maintain a low head position due to arthritis in the neck and back. For these horses, a feeder placed at chest level may be more comfortable, while still promoting the forward, elongated neck position that aids in salivation and digestion.

By understanding and catering to the inherent behaviors of horses, owners can provide the best possible care. As we've learned, something as simple as the position in which a horse consumes its feed can have significant impacts on their overall health. Feeding at ground level, when done correctly, can improve a horse's digestive health, respiratory health, and overall well-being.

How to Feed at Ground Level in Sandy Pastures & Preventing Sand Colic

Feeding for horses involves consideration of their natural behaviors as well as their health and well-being. When horses are fed from ground level, it allows them to eat in a manner that mimics their natural grazing posture with their head elevated. However, ground feeding can also pose certain risks, one of which is sand colic. This condition can occur when horses eat sand along with their feed, which can accumulate in the digestive tract and potentially cause severe discomfort or health issues.

To mitigate this risk while still providing a natural feeding environment, horse owners can use large rubber bins or mats for ground feeding. This way, horses can still feed at floor level, reducing the risk of respiratory issues due to inhalation of dust and particles from raised feeders or hay racks. By placing the appropriate amount of hay in these containers rather than directly on the ground, the risk of sand ingestion is significantly reduced. This practice is particularly useful in sandy paddock environments or when feeding large items like round bales, which a horse can easily consume from.

Remember, the key is to meet the needs that horses naturally have while ensuring their health and safety. By utilizing ground level feeding practices carefully and thoughtfully, we can support their instinctual behaviors and contribute to their overall well-being.

Conclusion

Understanding the natural behaviors and needs of horses can greatly impact their overall health and well-being. Horses naturally need to chew for significant periods, which produces saliva, an essential component for proper digestion. When we feed horses, it's important to consider these inherent traits.

Feeding hay at ground level, or using a ground-based hay feeder, allows horses to eat in a position that closely mimics their natural grazing posture. This encourages slower eating, which increases chew time and salivation, beneficial for digestion and reducing the risk of colic. Horses are also able to eat with their heads in a lowered position, which aligns with their natural behavior and contributes to better respiratory health.

However, this doesn't mean that horses should always be fed directly on the ground. Risks such as ingestion of sand or potential parasites must be considered. Therefore, slow feeders, hay nets, or elevated floor-level feeders can offer a practical solution, keeping the feed clean while still promoting a natural feeding posture.

Lastly, it's important to remember that feeding also involves monitoring your horse's health and adjusting feeding practices as needed. Some horses, especially older ones, may need adaptations to their feeding routines due to health issues.

In essence, we, as horse owners, need to replicate their natural feeding habits as closely as possible while ensuring their safety and comfort. Providing a feeding environment that allows for natural equine behavior isn't just about their physical health—it's also a significant aspect of their overall well-being and happiness.





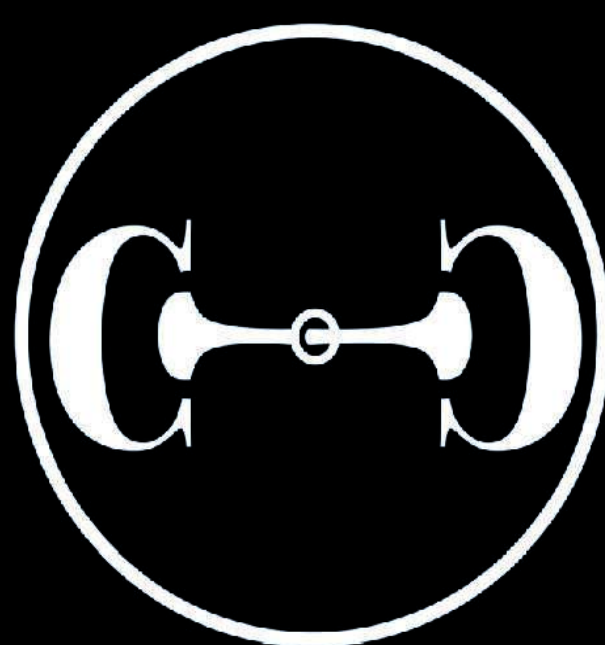
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