



# REINS

Regional Equine Information Network System

## REINS Region 14 Newsletter

Volume 1, Winter 2006



Serving horse owners of  
Chatham, Wake,  
Orange and Durham Counties

**H**appy New Year! Region 14 REINS is very excited to offer their first quarterly newsletter. Our goal is to help educate the horse owners of Wake, Chatham, Orange and Durham Counties, giving up to date information on various horse related subjects. If you would like us to write an article on a subject that is of interest to you please contact us and we will be sure to get it into one of the quarterly newsletters.

For those of you that haven't heard about REINS, please go to: [http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/an\\_sci/extension/horse/NC\\_Adult/reins.htm](http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/an_sci/extension/horse/NC_Adult/reins.htm)

This website will give you all the information on the REINS program and how to become a volunteer. You may also contact Sam Groce, REINS Region 14 Coordinating Extension Agent at 919.542.8202 or by e-mail at [sam\\_groce@ncsu.edu](mailto:sam_groce@ncsu.edu).

**Look for Spring 2006 quarterly newsletter on aging horses**

### Region 14 REINS Events

On November 5<sup>th</sup>, Region 14 held their first annual **Barn Tour**. There were 3 featured barns, all in the Eastern Wake Region on this tour.

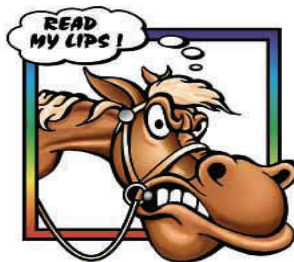
Special topics included-*Feeding Your Horse* by Meredith Mills of Southern States, *Pasture Management* by Sam Groce of Chatham County Cooperative Extension, *Training Your Thoroughbred* by Curtis Dean and Lawson Walston and *Semen Transportation and Barn and Fencing Safety* by Dr. Bob Meyer.

A catered lunch was held at Neuse River animal hospital followed by a presentation on Equine Acupuncture by Dr. Jim and Dr. Bob Meyer. If you are interested in getting information on the 2006 Barn Tour please contact us.

**February 2006** –Date TBA  
**Tractor Supply of Knightdale**  
Customer Appreciation Day

## Straight From The Horses Mouth!

When was the last time you had your horses teeth floated? Is your horse being resistant to the bit lately? Is he/she losing some feed when eating? Does your horse tilt its head while chewing feed or hay? Is your older horse losing weight? All these questions can possibly be answered by having your veterinarian check your horses' teeth.



It is recommended that their teeth be checked twice a year from yearling to 5 years old and then annually unless problems arise.

Here are some terms you should become familiar with so you can better understand what your veterinarian is saying.

**Incisors** - Front teeth, just inside the lips, used to grasp, nip and pull grass (and also to bite you with!)

**Premolars** - The first three sets of large cheek teeth on both the top and bottom jaws, used for grinding. There is a full deciduous set followed by a full permanent set.

**Molars** - The second three sets of large cheek teeth on the top and bottom jaws, used for grinding. There are no deciduous molars, they erupt as permanent teeth.

**Deciduous** - "Baby" teeth. They are replaced by permanent teeth.

**Permanent** - "Adult" teeth. They are intended to remain for the horse's life.

**Arcade** - Refers to a row of teeth (i.e. there are four arcades of cheek teeth and two arcades of incisors).

**Occlusion** - The contact points of opposing teeth; the occlusal surface refers to the chewing or biting surfaces.

**Malocclusion** - Abnormal contact between opposing teeth.

**"In Wear"** - The point in time when opposing teeth have reached sufficient height above the gum line to grind against one another.

**Eruption** - The movement of the tooth crown out from the bone of the jaw into the mouth.

**Shedding caps** - The loss of expired baby teeth as the new permanent teeth erupt to take their place.

**Cheek teeth** - A general term used to indicate all the grinding teeth, the premolars and molars.

**Crown** - The portion of the tooth that gradually erupts into the mouth and is used for grinding, not the root.

**Mastication** - The act of chewing or grinding food.

**Cap** - Horseman's term for a baby tooth as it sits in place on the permanent tooth ready to erupt.

## **The Baby is Coming!!**

It's that time of year! There is excitement in both the barn and the house awaiting the arrival of the new addition to the family. There are some changes in the mares' bodily appearance that can help you prepare for the arrival of your new foal.

**Prior to foaling** - The mares udder starts to become descended. This commonly takes place during the last month of gestation. The mares' udder may fill up at night while she is resting and shrink during the day while she exercises. When the udder remains full through out the day then foaling is probably imminent. This is when it might be a good idea to start watching the mare closely.

**Teat distension**- the milk begins to let down into the teats 4-6 days prior to parturition.

**Relaxation of the muscles of the pelvic area**- relaxation of this region usually occurs 7-14 days prior to foaling. These changes allow the fetus to pass through the birth canal with greater ease. This process is gradual and may not be seen on all mares; but in most a distinctive change in the appearance can be seen. A hollow develops on either side of the root of the tail as muscles of the hip and buttock area start to relax. This area can be examined each day when the mare is checked. The abdomen becomes increasingly pendulous as it enlarges and about a week prior to foaling it may appear to shrink as the foal shifts into position in preparation for foaling. This change is not always



**Waxing** - Wax-like beads appear at the end of each teat (they are actually droplets of colostrum). This can happen anytime between 12-36 hours prior to foaling or up to a week or two before foaling. It sometimes fails to occur in some mares. Therefore, this may not be a reliable method of predicting foaling as it can be so variable between individual mares.

**Relaxation of the vulva** - Within the last 24-48 hours before foaling the mare's vulva can be observed to swell and relax in preparation to stretch several times its normal size to allow passage of the foal.

**Milk flow**-Appearance of wax on the end of the teats can also be accompanied by droplets of milk. Although wax and milk secretion usually indicates delivery will occur very soon, many mares foal without either (particularly in maiden mares), while some mares drip or stream milk for several days prior to foaling.

Unfortunately, mares that stream milk prior to foaling lose large amounts of colostrum, which is the vital first milk that contains antibodies and a laxative for the newborn foal. Mares showing spontaneous milk flow should be closely watched, not only for the onset of foaling but also to determine how much colostrum is lost during this period. If the mare is losing a significant quantity it should be collected and frozen. Colostrum can be thawed and fed to the new born foal at birth.

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## The Baby is Coming!!

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**Commercial milk testing-** Several commercial kits to estimate foaling time are now available. These test kits are based on the fact that in most mares, calcium and magnesium concentrations rise progressively during the latter portion of gestation to the time of foaling. A majority of mares show a significant rise in calcium and magnesium concentration just prior to parturition. This allows you to estimate time of foaling within 12 to 24 hours. These kits are most useful to determine when the mare will most likely **not** foal. In other words, if the test shows no changes in the calcium concentration, the mare probably will not foal within the next 24 hours, and thus would not need to be watched as closely. When a rise in calcium is indicated, you could then direct more attention to the mare which is close to foaling. Ask your veterinarian for more information and availability of these kits.

**Restlessness-** Many mares exhibit behavior changes during the last few weeks of gestation. A mare can become cranky and restless as she enters the first stage of labor and usually wants to be left alone. She may walk continually in pasture or stall, switch her tail, look at her sides and kick at her abdomen. These signs can also be indicative of colic, but if the mare eats, drinks, defecates and urinates frequently then the first stage of labor is probably in progress and colic is not an issue.

**Sweating-** As labor approaches the mare often breaks into a sweat. The mare's neck and/or flanks may feel warm and damp or a body wide general sweat may occur.

References: [myhorsematters.com](http://myhorsematters.com) and [horsetalk.com](http://horsetalk.com)

## REINS: We're Here to Help You

If you need information about horses or a guest speaker for a program, the REINS volunteers are here to serve you. Feel free to contact any of the following Certified REINS volunteers for help, advice or information.

### Wake County

- Diane Ferello  
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### Chatham County

- Margaret or Graham Moore  
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- Betty or Woody Hathaway  
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