Preventative Medicine Protocol

CORE Vaccinations:

(Recommended for ALL horses, ALL the time)

- Eastern Equine Encephalitis
- Western Equine Encephalitis
- West Nile Virus Myeloencephalitis
- Tetanus
- Rabies

The *good* news: Most of the important preventable infectious diseases of horses do NOT effectively spread from horse to horse, so barn-wide outbreaks do not occur.

The *bad* news: These diseases tend to be very serious, and are very often fatal, so boarding and show barns typically want to do everything possible to ensure that none of their boarders are stricken. While spread of these conditions from horse-to-horse is quite unlikely, there are often significant liability implications for barn-owners if boarded horses become affected.

PLAN:

Boarders – ***Require*** boarders to vaccinate annually for these diseases.
(Recommend late April/May)

Visitors – ***Strongly suggest*** that visitors should vaccinate annually.

Risk-Based Vaccinations (High Risk):
(Recommended for ALL horses in open barns, or travelling beyond SW Montana)

- Equine Influenza
- Equine Herpes Virus 1 & 4

The *good* news: These diseases are rarely diagnosed in our region. Vaccinations are quite effective at preventing the spread of equine Influenza, as well as the respiratory and reproductive forms of equine Herpes virus.

The *bad* news: These are viral respiratory diseases, both of which can spread rapidly when unvaccinated horses share airspace with a sick horse.   Outbreaks can occur, with large percentages of the population getting sick, requiring a lot of veterinary care as well as long-term quarantine of facilities.   This can create liability issues for barn owners.   Not all vaccines are equally protective.

PLAN:

Boarders – ***Require*** boarders to vaccinate twice annually for these diseases.
(Recommend late April/May, and again in October/November)

Visitors – ***Require*** visitors to vaccinate twice annually for these diseases.

Risk-Based Vaccinations (Medium Risk):

(Recommended for SOME horses in SW Montana, depending on local factors)

- Potomac Horse Fever (PHF)

The *good* news: Potomac Horse Fever is not spread from horse to horse, and only occurs with direct exposure to the insects that carry the disease.   This is much more likely to happen in certain endemic areas.

The *bad* news: PHF infection can be acquired from hay grown in the endemic areas.   Horses can develop life-threatening complications like laminitis, especially when not treated promptly.

PLAN:

Boarders & Visitors: ***Consider*** vaccination for all boarders and visitors, especially when risk is deemed high. The vaccine can be administered twice yearly, but it is most important to target vaccination in mid-Summer, since the peak season in Montana usually starts in August, and because immunity may wane rapidly.

Risk-Based Vaccinations (Lower Risk):

(Recommended for SOME horses in SW Montana, depending on local factors.)

- Streptococcus equi equi ("Strangles")

The *good* news: Although outbreaks occur from time to time, Strep equi is not highly prevalent in our region.   It can be a serious disease, but when medical care is well-managed, the vast majority of horses make a complete recovery.

The *bad* news: During an outbreak, the risk of becoming infected is obviously higher.   Strep equi can spread readily from horse to horse, especially when animals are kept together in close quarters or with shared waterers, wheel-barrows, personnel, etc.   Vaccination can help minimize likelihood or severity of infection (depending on which vaccine product is used), although vaccine side effects are somewhat more common with either of the 2 available commercial products.

PLAN:

Boarders & Visitors: ***Consider*** vaccination, especially when risk is deemed high.

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