



Ask the VMD

Leon Riegel

Tim Trayer

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A reader asks: We have an old horse that's around 25 years old. We have had his teeth floated faithfully, and were told that his grinding teeth are just about worn away. Should we put him on a special diet? Is there a recommended recipe for a mash?

Dr. Sheaffer comments: You are correct in having the teeth of your 25 year old horse examined on a regular basis. I recommend that this be done at six month intervals, twice a year. This is especially important for horses that are over 12 to 14 years of age.

Equine teeth grow continuously during the life of a horse. Dental x-rays of a young horse show the roots of the cheek teeth extending very deep into the jaw bones. It is these cheek teeth, called premolars and molars, that most frequently need to be treated.

Treatment consists of "floating", filing or rasping, the sharp edges that will cut the cheek or tongue when the horse chews grain. Generally, it is the upper cheek teeth that lacerate the cheek while the lower cheek teeth cause injury to the tongue.

Have your veterinarian examine the mouth for

evidence of laceration, ulcers or other injury from sharp points on the teeth.

As a horse ages over twenty years, his ability to chew whole grains decreases. It would be good if you would break the hull on the grain by rolling or cracking. Rolled oats, barley or corn do not have to be chewed as thoroughly as whole grains. The digestive system will be able to extract more nutrients from the feed when the grains are rolled or cracked.

Coarse grinding is also acceptable providing that the oats are not turned into a fine powder. Pelleted rations, fed along with long stem hay, may also be appropriate for your horse.

Hay for older horses should be of average to good quality. Look for a mixed hay, part timothy or other grass and part alfalfa or clover, that has a good green color and does not contain any mold. Stay away from hay with poor color that was too old before it was mowed and baled.

I have found that older horses, regularly fed bran in their diet, have less problems with impaction colic. Bran adds bulk to the

diet and also is a mild laxative.

Bran can be added daily at the rate of one or two cups mixed with the normal grain ration. Many horsemen give a hot bran meal twice weekly.

Contact your veterinarian for recommendations regarding addition of bran to your horse's ration.

Dutch Country Goat Assn. to meet here Tuesday

LANCASTER — The January meeting of the Dutch Country Dairy Goat Assn. will be held Tuesday, Jan. 8, 7:30 p.m. in the basement of the Farm and Home Center, Lancaster.

"Kids, Kidding, and Doe Care" will be the topic for a round-table discussion on various methods of handling the up-coming kidding season.

The Club, formerly the Lancaster County Dairy Goat Club, recently reorganized and elected officers for 1980. They are: Pat Kauffman, Pequea, President; Jacob Fisher, Manheim, Vice-President; Meg Park, Drumore, and Jill Wagner, Holtwood, Secretaries; and Ivan

Hog inventory up 2% projected farrowing down

HARRISBURG — There were 840,000 hogs and pigs on Pennsylvania farms December 1, 1979, according to the Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service. This inventory was up two percent from a year ago and six percent from December 1, 1977.

Breeding stock at 89,000 was down 23 percent from last year, while market hogs at 751,000 were up seven percent. The fall (June-November) pig crop for 1979 of 511,000 pigs was three percent less than last year's fall pig crop of 526,000.

There were 70,000 sows farrowed with an average of 7.3 pigs per litter.

Keystone farmers intend to farrow 70,000 sows during the spring (December-May) of 1980. If realized, farrowings will be three percent less than last year.

Nationally, inventory of hogs and pigs was estimated at 67.0 million head, 11 percent above a year earlier, 18 percent more than December 1, 1977, and the largest December 1 inventory since 1970.

Breeding inventory at 9.55 million was virtually unchanged from a year ago but 11 percent above two years ago.

Market hog inventory at 57.4 million was 14 percent above last year and 20 percent more than December 1, 1977.

U.S. hog producers intend to farrow 7.18 million sows during the December 1979-May 1980 period about the same as a year ago and 19 percent above two years ago.

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