

Ask the VMD

Leon Riegel Tim Trayer Edgar Sheaffer

Lancaster Farming, Saturday, April 26, 1980–C17

aggravated.

Frog and thrush-

not a horse's fairy tale

What is the best method of

Dr. Sheaffer comments:

Thrush is a degenerative

becomes

A reader asks:

The bacteria causing thrush are commonly present in most barns and stables. Therefore, unsanitary stalls will readily produce the disease.

The steps in treatment are three. First, clean your stalls and keep them clean and dry. Second, pick and scrub the horse's feet thoroughly, EVERY DAY. Thirdly, apply an astringent or a strong antiseptic around the frog, heel and sole, depending on the areas affected.

Three common medications are copper sulfate pastes, strong iodine



solutions, and a commercial preparation called Kopertox. There are other overthe-counter preparations you may find satisfactory. A word of caution con-

cerning thrush medications - most of them will make the hoof dry and hard. This is a problem especially if you are bedding your horse on wood shavings rather than straw. If that is your situation, you may want to alternate a softening hoof dressing with the thrush medication.

Preventing thrush from reoccurring is similiar to treating the condition. Keep your stalls clean and dry. Pick the horse's hooves daily. And, use medications as soon as any thrush begins to appear.

Be sure not to confuse thrush with scratches, greese heel, or cancher. Thrush has an offensive odor and the hoof and frog usually appear moist.

In the early stages, the horn of the hoof becomes whitish-gray in color and quite crumbly. You may be able to tear parts of the frog away with your fingers.

In the later stages, the frogs may be partially or completely eaten or burned away by the disease, and the odor will tell you beyond a shadow of a doubt that the horse has thrush.

If you have a question you would like answered by the team from Valley Animal Hospital, send it to Ask the VMD, Box 366, Lititz, Pa. 17543. Questions will be kept anonymous on request.

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