

## **Hoof Care for Summer**

Horses' hooves can really take a beating in the summer due to stomping with flies and bouts of high moisture and long periods of dryness. Hoof care becomes even more important during this part of the year.

- 1) Hooves tend to crack and lose shoes-stomping at flies can loosen shoes when the hooves are already in a weakened condition. Periods of dryness cause small cracks to form allowing dirt and debris to work their way up into the white line. When it rains the hooves swell and trap this dirt and debris causing possible abscesses and weakening the hoof wall. Just as licking your lips actually causes them to crack and lose moisture-hooves lose moisture with all the weather changes in the summer.
- 2) Bruises tend to occur due to the hardness of the ground.

### **What you can do:**

1) Practice good fly control. As horse owners we all ask one another what fly spray is working this year and it seems to be a bigger problem each year so let's focus on other things we can do aside from fly spray. Compost manure-the heat will kill fly larvae. Remove manure from pastures if possible. Spread manure out away from horses on an unused field. Use fly tape or traps. Keep horses in during day. The flies bother them much less at night.

2) If your horse's hooves are bruised we have had great success with a product called Magic Cushion. Apply a thin layer of Magic Cushion to the bottom of your horse's hooves and cover with a diaper and duct tape. This process can be repeated for a few days. If no improvement is seen medical and/or farrier attention may be needed.

3) Use a sealant such as Tuff Stuff, Crossapol, or Keratex on the outside of your horse's hooves, especially over nail holes, a couple of times a week. Do not apply to the coronary band-this area needs to breathe. The sealant will keep the moisture balance in your horse's feet and help prevent cracking and shoe loosening.

4) Keep up with farrier care. Regular farrier care can keep your horse's hooves balanced and healthy which will help prevent cracks and damage.

And as always please don't hesitate to call if you have any questions or concerns. We wish all our clients a healthy and happy summer!