

COMPREHENSIVE CARE OF THE OLDER HORSE

COURSE OUTLINE

by

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WEEK ONE – THE AGING PROCESS

- I. Theories of aging
- II. How old is old?
- III. Physical signs of aging
- IV. Biochemical aging

WEEK TWO – DIGESTIVE TRACT CHANGES

- I. The mouth
- II. Small intestinal digestion
- III. Fermentation in the large bowel
- IV. Colic risks
- V. Parasite resistance

WEEK THREE – HEART AND LUNGS

- I. Functional changes
- II. Lung disorders
- III. Heart murmurs
- IV. Heart failure
- V. Sudden death

WEEK FOUR – HORMONAL CHANGES

- I. Normal aging
- II. Hyper and hypothyroidism
- III. Pituitary pars intermedia dysfunction and complications
- IV. Stress tolerance
- V. Sex hormones

WEEK FIVE – REPRODUCTION

- I. The older stallion
- II. Cycling changes in mares
- III. The aging uterus
- IV. Pregnancy risks

WEEK SIX – MUSCULOSKELETAL

- I. Arthritis and the aging joint
- II. Age effects on tendons
- III. Osteoporosis
- IV. Aging muscle and body composition changes

WEEK SEVEN – EXERCISE

- I. Importance of exercise
- II. How much
- III. Assessing, and dealing with, limitations
- IV. Conditioning the older horse

WEEK EIGHT – OTHER DISEASES OF OLDER HORSES

- I. The eyes
- II. The urinary system
- III. The liver and pancreas
- IV. Malignant and benign tumors
- V. Anemia

WEEK NINE – SPECIAL MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- I. Weather and thermoregulation
- II. The older horse in a herd setting
- III. Nutrition and designer diets
- IV. Hoof care
- V. Vaccination and deworming
- VI. Health screening

WEEK TEN – THE GOLDEN YEARS

- I. Planning ahead for issues facing very old horses
- II. Record keeping, staying objective
- III. When is it “time”?
- IV. Saying good-bye