



HORSE HEALTH NUTRITION

6th Edition

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European Equine Health & Nutrition Congress

Press release: Over 220 delegates from 21 countries celebrate the 6th meeting of the EEHNC with the focus on “Feeding for Gastrointestinal Health”

Over 220 delegates from 21 countries attended the 6th edition of the European Equine Health & Nutrition Congress (EEHNC) that was hosted by Ghent University (Belgium). Internationally recognized specialists in nutrition, veterinary scientists, veterinarians, industry representatives and equine professionals attended this meeting. The congress focused on “Feeding for Gastrointestinal Health”. The first day of this congress was dedicated to the relationship between nutrition and the prevention of gastrointestinal problems in healthy horses (Friday). The following day was dedicated to the nutrition and health of horses with specific gastrointestinal intestinal health problems (Saturday). Participants could also follow practical workshops.

Chris Proudman from the University of Liverpool summarized that our current understanding of the equine intestinal physiology allows the following dietary recommendations for avoiding colic: horse owners should limit the amount of hydrolysable carbohydrate as much as possible while maximizing forage intake and introduce dietary changes slowly. It is also important to be consistent with quantities and type of feed. Dietary supplements that enhance the carbohydrate digestion may potentially be considered but more scientific studies are needed for supporting their use. One of the take home messages of the second day was that more understanding of how nutrition affects the microbiota in horses is needed. Changes in the microbiota composition do not necessarily cause problems, however, in the case of colic, changes can be responsible for production and accumulation of potentially toxic compounds. Insight in these interactions may potentially improve nutritional strategies to prevent and help horses with gastrointestinal diseases. More importantly, insight into the production of volatile fatty acids produced in the hindgut following dietary manipulation, specifically the production of butyrate, may be of special interest for optimizing the health of the large intestinal mucosa of horses.

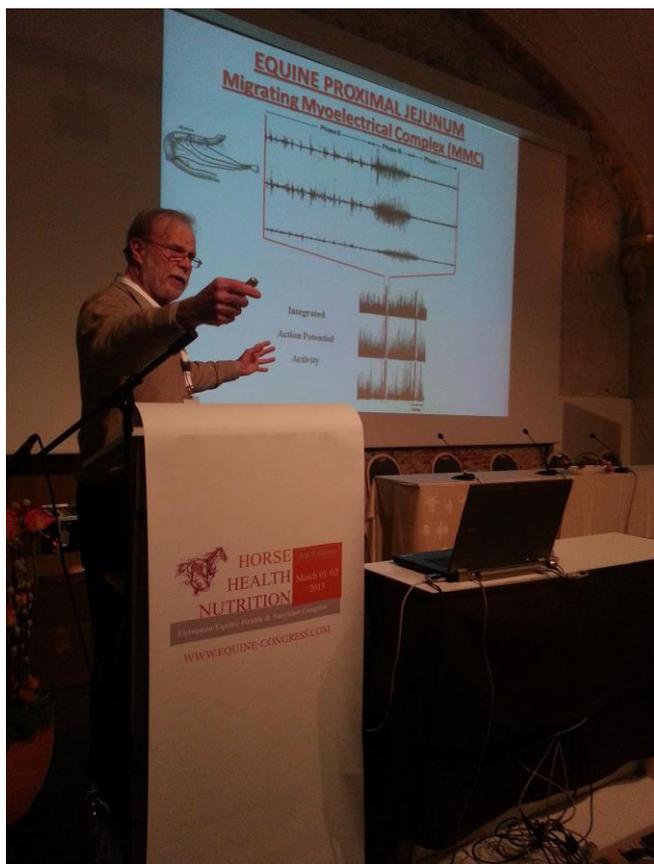
The Poster Award was given to Jessica Taylor (Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, UK). She received a 500 Euro check from Peter Bollen, President of the EEHNC, for her abstract, entitled "The Effect of 5 Different Wetting Treatments on the Microbial Concentration in Hay for Horses". The purpose of this study was to establish the efficacy of five different treatments commonly adopted by horse owners to reduce the airborne and aerobic bacteria, yeast and mold concentrations within randomly selected UK hay. The results of this applied study suggest that the use of a specifically designed steamer was seen to be an effective protocol than homemade steamers, kettles of hot water, or soaking for reducing microbial counts.

The first EEHNC was an initiative of Cavalor and took place in Antwerp in 2000. Currently, the 6th EEHNC was organized in cooperation with the departments from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of Ghent University, Utrecht University and the University of Liège. The Animal Science Group (Wageningen University and Research Centre) was also involved.

The proceedings of the European Equine Health & Nutrition Congress are also available as a booklet. The proceedings booklet contains reviews of the invited speaker sessions and abstracts from the poster session. Information about the congress and order information regarding the proceedings can be obtained from <http://www.equine-congress.com>

Note for the editorial board

More information about this congress can be obtained from dhr. Dr. Ing. D.A. van Doorn M.Sc. E-mail: David.van.doorn@equine-congress.com Tel: +31 (0) 30-2533474. Please e-mail david.van.doorn@equine-congress.com if you are interested in providing extended information about this congress on your website, journal or other form of media.



Picture: probably the 6th EEHNC was one of the last presentations that Emeritus Prof. Al Merritt from the University of Florida attended as speaker. Prof Merritt gave an overview about some specific features of the equine digestive tract and also presented some current thoughts about feeding horses with gastric ulcers (Picture: Anton Luyten).



Picture: Audience 6th EEHNC



Picture: Prof. Geert Janssens, chairman of the 6th EEHNC scientific committee leading a round table about preventing gastrointestinal problems by dietary strategies with Prof. Annette Zeyner, Prof. Véronique Julliand and Prof. Chris Proudman (Picture: Mirian Hendriks Fotografie).

More pictures are available on request