



April, 2011

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**What's new at Foothill Mobile Veterinary Services?**

**Small animal services (for dogs and cats) now available:** vaccinations, heartworm testing, and in-home euthanasia.

**Routine appointments available in the early evening:** Routine appointments for large animals may be scheduled between 6 and 8 PM, for no extra charge, using our online appointment request link at [www.foothillmobilevet.com](http://www.foothillmobilevet.com) or by calling 530-622-0174.

**Second Microchipping and Vaccination Clinic** scheduled for **Saturday, May 7th at Coloma Feed Store:** see our home page for details.

**April 2011: Topic of the Month: Laminitis**

With the recent heavy rains, which are likely to be followed shortly by a period of warm, sunny weather, we can expect an even more lush growth of Spring grass than is common in our area. This will have some potentially severe effects on our horses, since over eating rapidly growing grass is a leading cause of laminitis (commonly referred to as "founder"). Such grass is rich in a type of simple carbohydrate called "fructans", which can have metabolic effects on horses leading to laminitis. The exact mechanism of this pathology is unknown.

Every year, we see numerous cases of Spring grass founder, and this year is expected to be worse than normal. Horses that have foundered previously, overweight horses, genetically predisposed horses such as Morgans and ponies, horses affected by Insulin Resistance, and older horses with PPID (so-called "Cushing's Disease) are particularly at risk, but grass laminitis could be a problem for any horse, donkey, or mule.

Prevention is as simple (and as difficult!) as keeping horses off of the grass until it has finished growing, and is beginning to dry out. For horses with strong or multiple risk factors, this should be absolute: no spring grass at all. For horses without particular risk, management can include very gradual access to grass (not full turn-out to start; progressing slowly each day).

Please see our Client Resources page for a link to an article in Horse and Rider Magazine that may be helpful, and as always, please feel free to call or e-mail at any time for a fuller discussion of your particular circumstances and horses.

**If you suspect that your horse is in the early stages of laminitis, please call immediately for assistance, as this is a true life-threatening emergency.**

As always, we look forward to working with you to optimize the health of your horse. **Please call (530) 622-0174 for routine and emergency care of your horse, camelid or small ruminant.**