



Preface
Podiatry



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Guest Editor

The importance of understanding the myriad of foot problems and the practice and art of farriery are obvious in veterinary medicine. Foot problems are generally regarded as the most common cause of lameness in horses. The old adage, “no foot, no horse,” takes on new meaning if we consider the value of the horses we treat and the constant rigors placed on this structure (ie, the hoof) in their unending pursuit of high-level competition. I believe it safe to say that not a day goes by in the life of an equine practitioner that does not involve the examination of at least one foot on a horse or foal. The challenge is further compounded by the fact that knowledge and expertise in podiatry is shared by three professions (equine practitioners, scientists, and farriers), and as such the information trails do not always intersect. Unfortunately, the factual information base assigned to the equine foot is incredibly scant when weighed against its importance. Much of what is thought, practiced, and even taught is based on tradition and opinion rather than fact, research, or sound, long-term clinical impressions.

The authors assembled for this issue of the *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Equine Practice* hail from both the university setting and private practice. They are all students of podiatry and have presented the most current information available in a concise, practical manner. I owe them a debt of gratitude. The theme that is emphasized throughout this issue is “back to the basics.” Understanding the basic principles of podiatry allows the practitioner/farrier to manage the hoof in such a manner as to prevent hoof disease, maintain a sound horse, and implement therapeutic shoeing when necessary. As cooperation and the relationship between the veterinary and

farrier professions continue to grow and improve, it is hoped that the information contained within these pages will enhance this process.

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