

## Preface

# Critical care for all ages



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*Guest Editor*

It has given me great pleasure to serve as guest editor for this issue of *The Veterinary Clinics of North America: Equine Practice*, dedicated to critical care of horses of all ages. The contributing authors represent some of the best “horse doctors” critical care has to offer, and most are nationally and internationally recognized as leaders in their areas of expertise. Their clinical skills and dedication to patient welfare are unequalled. The specialty of veterinary emergency and critical care has grown almost exponentially in the last 15 years and has welcomed those interested in providing the best care possible to our equine patients, large and small. The arena of critical care of the horse is without clear definition but provides for unique interaction between several specialties—internal medicine, surgery, and anesthesia—allowing for cross-training of individual clinicians and earnest dialogue regarding how to provide optimal care to our sickest patients.

Much attention has been paid to the critically ill neonate by equine practitioners; because of this, our knowledge base regarding these small patients has expanded to the point where we may perhaps be in the opposite position to that described in the foreword to the April 1985 issue dedicated to neonatal equine disease, where Dr. Jill Beech most appropriately noted that, “When information was extrapolated from the adult horse to the foal, it became rapidly apparent that this was inadequate; neonatal foals are not just little horses.” Our knowledge regarding foals has increased so much that we must guard against directly extrapolating information about the care of the foal to the adult horse; adult horses are not just big foals. This issue represents a group effort to ensure that our vision stays wide and both the

adult horse and foal are included in our consideration of what constitutes critical care in equine medicine. Topics were chosen to reflect some of the issues currently under investigation or considered controversial in this field; when appropriate, known differences between the adult and neonate have been highlighted. This slim volume is by no means all-inclusive and must be viewed only as a small symposium addressing some of the issues currently facing the practitioner treating the critically ill equine patient.

This issue was not produced in a vacuum, and I must take this opportunity to acknowledge, first of all, the authors who contributed to this issue. The interest they each have in this area is evidenced by the enthusiasm they showed for this project and in the sacrifice of time they made and the quality of the articles they wrote. Thank you all for making this issue happen. I must also acknowledge Dr A. Simon Turner, Consulting Editor, for asking me to serve as guest editor for this issue and for his foresight in recommending the topic of “critical care in horses of all ages.” I also thank John Vassallo at WB Saunders for his support, guidance, and encouragement. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the patients, who have taught us so much.

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