



# STEINBECK COUNTRY EQUINE CLINIC NEWSLETTER



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## DR. KENT FOWLER ACCEPTS A NEW CHALLENGE IN SACRAMENTO



Some offers are too good to pass up. After 27 years in private practice, the opportunity to address veterinary issues at a statewide level was one of those offers for Dr. Fowler. For all of you who were both surprised and saddened by the news, you are not alone. From the time he was contacted about the position, Dr. Fowler had only a couple of weeks to make his decision and move his office to Sacramento. As a veterinarian and community member in Monterey County, it would be

impossible to overemphasize the positive impact Dr. Fowler has had on countless horses, horse owners, and students. Currently, he is commuting and plans to remain an active member of the Salinas community, for which we are grateful. His presence is missed daily at S.C.E.C., but we wish him well in his new endeavor. (See page 4 for a personal letter from Dr. Fowler.)

## EKLIN DIGITAL X-RAY SYSTEM IS A NEW ADDITION TO S.C.E.C.

If you haven't heard of digital radiography, don't feel out of date. Digital radiography is a relatively new method for taking, viewing and storing x-rays that is taking both the human and veterinary medical professions by storm. The computerized system offers a number of exciting advantages over traditional images. (See page 2 for information).



## S.C.E.C. WELCOMES DR. TISH CHISM

Dr. Chism joined the S.C.E.C. family on Feb. 15. Dr. Chism most recently worked as an associate in a busy equine referral practice in Santa Ynez. She attended veterinary school at Oklahoma State University and completed an internship and surgical residency at the University of Tennessee. She brings to S.C.E.C. not only her advanced training in surgery but a special interest in reproduction as well. Needless to say, we haven't had a problem keeping her busy since she arrived. We think Dr. Chism is an excellent fit for our practice and we are excited about having her join our team at Steinbeck Equine.



### In this issue

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## DIGITAL RADIOGRAPHY



How does it work? The radiographic study is performed in the same way, except that instead of using a cassette containing film which must be developed, there is a sensor panel that feeds a digital signal directly to the computer. The image appears in about 4 seconds, so we know immediately if we need to make an adjustment to the angle. The computer corrects for exposure, so we don't get underexposed or overexposed shots.

Digital radiography gives us a few big advantages over traditional film radiography. First and foremost, the overall image quality of our studies has improved dramatically. Lesions that appear as questionable changes on film radiographs show up crystal clear on digital radiographs.

Second, because we get results in a matter of a few seconds instead of minutes, immediate adjustments can be made. If a shot is not perfect, we can change the angle and retake the shot; or if a problem is identified, it can be the focus of further images. For radiographs taken during surgery, this translates into a shortened anesthesia time. We can view the radiograph immediately and don't have to wait for the film to be developed between each view.



Lastly, because the images are stored digitally, we have many conveniences that were not possible with film. Instant access to any images on our workstation allows for immediate comparisons with previous examinations. Accurate measurements can be made on the computer (see radiographs above) as well as any adjustments to the brightness and contrast of the image. Every copy is an exact copy, so there is no image deterioration, and images are always on file in our archives. Images can be e-mailed, provided there is a broadband connection to the internet, or a CD can be made and sent out, making digital images much easier to share with a radiologist or referring veterinarian.

## WEST NILE VIRUS UPDATE



In 2004, West Nile Virus has been detected in bird and mosquito populations in California. If the time frame in California mirrors other states, we expect to begin seeing equine cases in the summer and fall of 2004. We have had some questions about the safety of the Fort Dodge vaccine. The following was taken from the USDA website [www.aphis.usda.com](http://www.aphis.usda.com).

"Some recent stories have suggested that the Fort Dodge Animal Health West Nile Virus Vaccine approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) may cause pregnant mares to abort or give birth to deformed foals. The misleading information in those articles has sparked many anxious phone calls from horse owners, veterinarians, and others involved with horses. Unfortunately, as a result, USDA is concerned that horse owners may not use an effective preventive measure against West Nile virus available to them, that of vaccinating their horses.

Horse owners should be assured that the vaccine is *safe*, and it *should be used as protection* against West Nile virus. Millions of doses of the vaccine have been used since USDA's Center for Veterinary Biologics approved its use in 2001."



## MONTEREY HORSE PARK NEWS

[www.montereyhorsepark.org](http://www.montereyhorsepark.org)

Since our last newsletter, the board has continued to work on improving the design of the Horse Park and has developed a tentative plan for Phase One of the construction. Proposed acquisition documents for the transfer of the land, currently in the form of a long-term lease with an option to buy, have been prepared and submitted to the County of Monterey. Discussions with the County are proceeding.

## HORSEMAN'S DAY SEMINAR

Mark your calendars: the 2004 Horseman's Day Seminar will be held on Saturday **September 25, 2004**. The program and keynote speaker are currently being worked out. We will let you know more of the details as the date approaches.

## WELCOME TO KYMBRE TAYLOR



Kymbre Taylor is the newest member of our reception team. She is a Registered Veterinary Technician and worked at Portola Animal Hospital for 10 years. Please offer her a warm welcome and be patient as she learns the ins and outs of the horse world.

## S.C.E.C. SUPPORTS R.A.V.S.

In many parts of the world - - those far removed from daily veterinary services - - people often cannot afford to provide routine care for their beloved pets. Sometimes they don't even know that their pets need routine care.

This is where the Human Society of the United States' Rural Area Veterinary Services (RAVS) enters the picture. RAVS brings veterinary services to poor communities around the globe, whether in Bolivia or Bell County, Kentucky. Volunteer veterinary students work with several veterinarians to provide not only essential services such as sterilizations and vaccinations, but also educational services such as talks on disease prevention and pet care.



Dr. Matt Durham overseeing a castration performed by volunteer veterinary students in Guatemala (Jan '04).

In addition to his involvement with Steinbeck Equine, Dr. Eric Davis heads the RAVS program. Before joining forces with the HSUS, Dr. Davis was veterinary director of Remote Area Medical (RAM) in Knoxville, Tennessee, where he founded the traveling veterinary services program in 1995. Dr. Davis has led teams into some of the neediest regions in the western hemisphere, including locations in Mexico, Guatemala, the Caribbean, Paraguay, Bolivia, Guyana, Guam, Palau, Pohnpei, Kosrae, not to mention countless rural communities and Native American reservations in the United States.

A typical RAVS site visit (or tour, for the longer trips abroad) will include 12-25 veterinary school volunteers and 3-5 veterinarians and technicians who together will run one or two clinics a day. By the time their multi-day tour is complete, volunteers and staff will have performed up to 300 vaccinations a day and 30-60 surgeries per clinic.

RAVS has benefited not only thousands of animals and their owners, but has also expanded the knowledge of veterinary school students who learn some important life lessons. "We are exposing future veterinarians to humane work. They need to know that it is right to come to the aid of animals in need," says Dr. Davis. For more information visit their website [www.HSUS.org/ravs](http://www.HSUS.org/ravs).

## NEW TREATMENT FOR UTERINE CYSTS OFFERED AT SCEC



Uterine cysts are a common finding during reproductive exams in mares. The benign cysts are easily visualized using either trans-rectal ultrasound or hysteroscopy (viewing the uterine lining by inserting an endoscope through the cervix). The cysts, which are most commonly formed in mares over 12 years old, do not cause a health risk to the mare. However, there are many studies implicating uterine cysts as a contributing factor in decreased conception rates, increased early embryonic death, and decreased foaling rates. A recent study examined 55 mares with uterine cysts. The mares were barren despite being bred for one or more consecutive seasons. The cysts were removed with laser surgery in the sedated standing mare. Within the study group, there was a dramatic improvement in conception and delivery rates. No surgical or post-operative complications were reported.

For an excellent overview of equine reproduction see the article "The Facts of Life" in *THE HORSE* Dec. 2003 or on their website [www.TheHorse.com](http://www.TheHorse.com)

## INTERN UPDATE



Dr. Corbett Post finishes his internship on June 1<sup>st</sup>, and he and his wife Jana are moving back home to Texas. We couldn't have been happier with our first intern; he was a perfect fit for S.C.E.C. and we wish we could convince him to stay. With four soon-to-be grandparents in Texas awaiting the birth of their first grandchild in June, we didn't have a chance. We wish them the best of luck and expect to have a baby picture for the next newsletter.

Dr. Erin Matern and Dr. Natasha Lefkowitz will begin internships at S.C.E.C. on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Both are UC Davis graduates and veteran RAVS volunteers. We are all very excited about their arrival.



January 9, 2004

Dear Clients,

After practicing large animal veterinary medicine for 26 ½ years, I have made a difficult yet exciting decision to accept a job offer with the California State Department of Food and Agriculture, Animal Health Division in Emergency Response programs. I will be involved with foreign animal diseases, potential natural disasters requiring emergency plans for animals, and potential bio-terrorism threats to both human and animal populations.

It has been a very difficult decision, but I am comfortable leaving the life of private practice, knowing the high professional standards of equine medicine and surgery at Steinbeck Country Equine Clinic. The entire excellent staff is caring and dedicated. This practice is quickly becoming one of the top referral equine hospitals in the state. I am very proud to have been a contributing veterinarian for years in this practice.

I very much appreciate your confidence and trust in the health care of your animals over the years. Many wonderful, lasting memories and friends will accompany me into the next chapter of my life. Veterinary medicine has been a rewarding and fulfilling career for me - - I hope to continue that up a different yet similar path.

Sincerely,

Kent Fowler, DVM



**Congratulations to  
Tiffany Peters and Dr. Matt Durham  
on their March 13<sup>th</sup> wedding.**



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Please visit our website [www.steinbeckequine.com](http://www.steinbeckequine.com)