

Laminitis and PETA (Poor Excuse for the Treatment of Animals) A Wake-up Call to the International Laminitis Research Community and Organizations for the Humane Care of Equines

Jaime Jackson, AANHCP Executive Director

"This study involved 16 adult horses, ranging in age from 6 to 14 yr old (mean, 11 yr old). The horses were euthanized by using a penetrating captive bolt, as approved by the Report of the American Veterinary Medical Association's Panel on Euthanasia." – Hood, D.M., Grosenbaugh, D.A., Mostafa, M.B., Morgan, S.J. and Thomas, B.C. (1993) The role of vascular mechanisms in the development of acute equine laminitis. *J. Vet. Intern. Med.* 7, 228-234.

"Ponies were euthanized at the Obel grade 2 stage of clinical laminitis and hoof lamellar tissues were harvested and examined for histopathological evidence of laminitis." – Asplin, K.E., Silience, M.N., Pollitt, C.C. and McGowan, C.M. (2007) Induction of laminitis by prolonged hyperinsulinaemia in clinically normal ponies. *Vet. J.* 174, 530-535.

"24 horses were divided into 3 groups. A lipopolysaccharide group (n = 5) that received endotoxin as an 8 h 7.5 ng/kg bwt/h i.v. continuous rate infusion and oligofructose via nasogastric intubation, developed clinical laminitis." – Tóth, F., Frank, N., Chamero, K.A. and Bostont, R.C. (2009) Effects of endotoxaemia and carbohydrate overload on glucose and insulin dynamics and the development of laminitis in horses. *Equine Vet. J.* 41, 52-858.

"Laminitis was induced as previously described. Briefly, BWE (*Junglas nigra*) was obtained by incubating 2 grams of black walnut shavings/kg body weight in 8L of deionized water overnight at room temperature and filtering it. Six liters of the BWE was administered via nasogastric tube. Horses were anesthetized either 3-4 hours after BWE administration at the onset of Obel grade 1 lameness." – 2010 Master's Thesis, L. Chiavaccini, Colorado State University.

"Objective: To assess presence of leukocytes and signs of epidermal stress/injury in the laminar tissue from 24 adult horses with CHO-induced laminitis." – Faleiros, R.R., Johnson, P.J., Nuovo, G.J., Messer, N. T., Black, S.J. and Belknap, J.K. (2011) Laminar leukocyte accumulation in horses with carbohydrate overload-induced laminitis. *J. Vet. Intern. Med.* 25, 107-115.



I HAVE LONG BEEN AWARE of the devastation that laminitis has caused worldwide to horses as a result of unnatural care practices. But I am also aware, with much frustration, that laminitis is 100 percent preventable, and, with the possible exception of the most egregious cases of

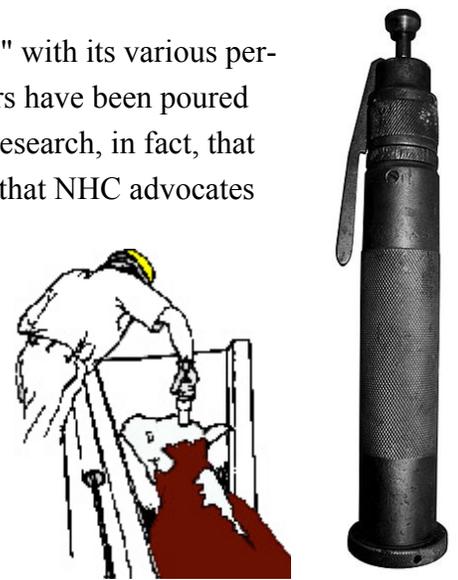
chronicity and criminal neglect, treatable, with the horse returned to soundness. This is to say, laminitis should be a thing of the past, or, at least rare, certainly not epidemic as it is today in every sector of the horse world — save those who engage in genuine natural horse/h hoof care (NHC) practices.



Lesser known is the toll taken on the many "faceless and nameless" horses who suffer and perish in the shadows of laminitis research. And these are the ones I wish to bring attention to in this paper. I am not sure how many horses are put to death as a result, but any number is unacceptable. And with the death toll showing no signs of abating, it is time for those who care to stand up and speak out against these abominations.

Laminitis research, it seems to me, has become almost "fashionable" with its various personalities "leading the attack" on this dreaded disease. Millions of dollars have been poured into the university sector to support their bottomless pit of "research". Research, in fact, that has brought not a single "insight" into laminitis prevention or treatment that NHC advocates haven't already advocated and practiced for years. Their promises of "success around the corner" are remindful of their close cousin, cancer researchers, who also clamor for funding, now in the billions since President Richard Nixon launched the "War On Cancer" in 1971 (National Cancer Act). The latter is now a giant industry that, as laminitis research is also portending to become, is nothing less than a self-perpetuating institution that thrives on disease, treating symptoms, and mega bucks.

Back in the shadows of laminitis research, the picture is not a pretty one — for the affected horses (see sidebar, right). And bear in mind that horses selected for these experiments are typically healthy to begin with; they are simply unwanted and, therefore, deemed "sacrificial". First, researchers inject or feed them high concentrations of a laminitis trigger (substance that "triggers" an inflammatory response and causes the hoof to separate from the horse). Slowly, the effect takes place as the foot's dermal structures begin to "burn" and crumble. *Helpless animals — victims if you will — in excruciating pain and no way to escape their agony.* Euthanasia follows by lethal injection or the notorious "penetrating captive bolt gun". Hooves are then severed from their limbs, cross-sectioned, and studied under powerful microscopes.



One version of the penetrating captive bolt gun cited in the first research paper above, here illustrated on a bovine. If you can stomach it, and I caution you not to if you think you can't, below is a youtube.com link to one being used on a very distressed horse. Note the laminitic hooves further marred by blatantly incompetent hoof work
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2eeiFr5zVg&list=LPvi6K62qVQCw&index=5&feature=plep>

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(Right) Nazi medical researchers were photographed conducting hypothermia experiments on behalf of the Luftwaffe (German air force) during WWII. Victims were forced to remain in tanks of ice water for hours (those are blocks of ice floating in the tank). Extreme rigor ("chills") developed in a short time. Numerous victims died in the course of these criminal experiments, medical torture by any measure of human decency. I have to ask myself, how can the horse-using community today stand by and let the same type of blatantly horrible experimentation take place on countless horses? [Report by SS-Untersturmführer Rascher about cooling experiments in Dachau, September 10, 1942. *Trials of War Criminals Before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals* - Washington, U.S Govt. Print. Off., 1949-1953.]



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I have to wonder why purported "humane" animal protection organizations like the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), and PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), and many others have sunk their heads in the ground as to what's happening. It's not like laminitis researchers and their institutions are hiding these facts. They are not beneath boldly soliciting funds.

All sights should be on laminitis (and lameness) prevention through proven NHC models, not through inhumane neo-Nazi type, medical torture experiments (see Sidebar, above). In this respect, there is a worthwhile parallel in human preventative medicine concerning the effects of smoking on lung cancer. Several years ago, the president of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) went on television to say, "If you're going to smoke, we can't help you. Quitting smoking is the only thing that can possibly save you."

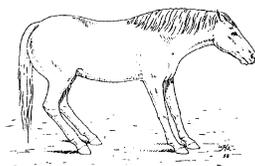
The message here is the same for horse owners: cease "feeding" laminitis causality or be a contributor to the burgeoning and trendy laminitis research industry that is causing the tragic suffering of defenseless horses given over for barbaric medical experimentation. The fact is, unnatural horse care practices are the overriding force driving this type of research. So horse owners inevitably must lead the way out of it by embracing and practicing NHC. The equine feed and pharmaceutical industries need to come to the party too, and stop creating feeds, drugs, and biotoxins that cause laminitis. If they, or anyone else, purport to not know what that means, then they should contact the AANHCP and find out.

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I'm for bringing a halt right now to all laminitis-inducing research because it is inhumane and because none of it is necessary. As humanitarians, we need to say this loudly and clearly to the perpetrators and their financial backers. I ask the reader, would you let this happen to your own, or any, healthy, sound horse? I hate to think of any horse helpless, trembling, and with his feet burning up inside, then euthanized by injection or a captive bolt gun to the back of his head. Instead, let's tell the perpetrators to embrace the "Four Pillars of NHC"¹ and help us get the word out. All horses deserve it, even the faceless and nameless ones now being herded into the black hole of pathology.

There are positive research alternatives that can and should be taken on by scientists. We need responsible, humane research conducted with our U.S. Great Basin wild, free-roaming horses. One example that is urgently needed, and that can contribute directly to better feeds for equines and laminitis *prevention*, is studying the natural diet of the horse. No one's done it yet, and it needs to be done — but only by qualified Great Basin biologists, ecologists, botanists, NHC advocates, agriculturists, and other responsible parties, including universities and the private sector, working together as a coordinated team. The feed industry and those now financing laminitis research should put their money here, where it is really needed, to help launch what would arguably be the greatest contribution to equine welfare in modern times. With 50 to 75 million horses worldwide, the market is huge and the positive impact of responsible research would be of incalculable value.



So, what can you do if you are reading this?

- ☞ First, recognize that this is a moral and ethical iniquity requiring intervention.
- ☞ Share this Director's Message with everyone you know (clients, vets, equine professionals, family and friends).
- ☞ Call, email or write the Dean of your local university's School of Veterinary Medicine to find out if they are inducing laminitis in any of their research projects. The Dean is responsible for oversight of all research conducted at any of their facilities. If they are, write them a letter explaining why such research needs to come to a halt. Include a copy of this paper. I've included a sample letter to the Dean in this paper's appendix. This simple action will put them "on alert" and send "warning" ripples to the PhDs in their laboratories, that their ethical foundation is not in good order. It will also send political waves toward state bureaucrats and legisla-

¹J. Jackson, *The Natural Trim: Principles and Practice*, C2: "The Four Pillars of NHC", pp. 39-52.

tors who are complicit in writing and enforcing animal experiment guidelines used by researchers.

☞ Next time you go to your local feed store, look at the ingredients label on the equine (feed) products. If it contains any sugar or sugar byproduct (including any version of beet pulp), don't buy it; instead, tell the proprietor that these are laminitis triggers and are harmful to all horses. Then, email or write the manufacturer, and tell them the same. Chances are good they will write you to say their products have been tested and are safe for horses; respectfully disagree and ask for their "research" documentation. Chances are good you won't hear from them again. That's how "deep" the problem is! Regardless, if enough people do this, they will get the message and begin to take stock of what they are doing and its ramifications for business if pressure continues to mount.

☞ If your horse, or client horse, is living out on pasture, get them out of there. Many varieties of grass in sufficient concentrations constitute a class of known laminitis triggers. Pollitt has shown that laminitis is precipitated by the consumption of Fructan (a sugar in some grasses),² although NHC practitioners like myself have known this for decades. Depending on the strength of the individual horse's immune system, digestive microbial imbalances ensue until toxins are absorbed in the blood and travel to the foot where enzymatic imbalances are then unleashed, causing inflammation and separation of the hoof from the horse (i.e., laminitis). Early symptoms (subclinical) commonly go unnoticed by horse owners, and even vets and hoof care professionals.³ Like getting cancer from smoking, there's only one sure way to prevent any of this from happening — don't do it. Remove them from the pasture and get them into a natural boarding environment,⁴ follow AANHCP feeding recommendations,⁵ and never worry again.

☞ If you are aware of any such research in progress, or planned, email us the names and addresses of the principals involved (researchers, their university hosts and funding sources). The AANHCP will then take steps to confront them with a signed public petition to halt their research.

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²See: "Equine Laminitis", (AAEP presentation, 2003) Australian Laminitis Research Unit, Queensland University: Christopher C. Pollitt, BVSc, PhD; Myat Kyaw-Tanner, BSc, PhD; Kathryn R. French, BSc, PhD; Andrew W. van Eps, BVSc; Joan K. Hendrikz, BSc; Mousa Daradka, DVM, PhD. Also see: C. Pollitt, K. Watts, "Equine Laminitis - Managing pasture to reduce the risk", Publication No. 10/063, Project No. PRJ-000526, Australian Government: Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation.

³J. Jackson, *NHC Field Guide*, pp. 26-30.

⁴Join the thousands of horse owners worldwide who are taking action by creating their own Paddock Paradise, a relatively new natural boarding concept. Go to Paddock Paradise Facebook or www.paddockparadise.com to learn more about this "founder free" environment that can truly be the best habitat for your horse, short buying property in the U.S. Great Basin!

⁵J. Jackson, *NHC Field Guide*, pp. 6-10.

☞ In the event that we are unaware of such research in progress, the AANHCP will confront the principals by petition when they do publish their findings (abstract) in a veterinary journal.

☞ Support the vital mission of the AANHCP and become a voice for the humane care of all equines based on the Four Pillars of NHC. A simple donation (the AANHCP is a 501c3 non-profit organization), for example, can go a long way to help us all serve horses. Examples:

- Operating expenses at our AANHCP headquarters for transmitting important information — webmaster, social media, education.
- Hosting visiting manufacturers, scientists, educators, advocates, practitioners, government officials, and public figures at our Paddock Paradise wanting to learn more about NHC.
- Developing and maintaining our official AANHCP Paddock Paradise — open to private tours by appointment.
- Hosting educational clinics and forums (e.g., ISNHCP scholarships and AANHCP continuing education).
- Conducting research [e.g., a current study is underway using infrared technology to 1) ascertain temperature fluctuations in the foot relative to controlled biodynamic influences in Paddock Paradise, 2) set data baselines for individual horses, 3) gather data for client horses living in less natural environments, 4) correlate baselines to inflammatory responses in rehab horses suffering from laminitis and other foot problems.]
- Please make a *donation* to help horses and make your voice heard:

Thank you.

Jaime Jackson
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[Name], [Degrees: DVM, PhD, DACVP, DACVM, etc.]
Dean, School of Veterinary Medicine
[Name of university or state college]
[Mailing address]

Dear Dean [Last name],

It has been brought to my attention that research involving laminitis induction in horses, and subsequent euthanasia, is being conducted at the [Name of institution], under the direction of [Title and lead researcher's name, e.g., Dr. Jackson], with principal funding provided by [name of principal fund provider if you know what/who it is].

Recently, Jaime Jackson, Executive Director of the Association for the Advancement of Natural Horse Care Practices (AANHCP), has written a paper citing the cruelty of this type of research (see attachment). I concur with Mr. Jackson, and because [Title and lead researcher's name in the possessive tense, e.g. Dr. Jackson's] experiments fall under your administrative jurisdiction, I strongly urge you to investigate what is happening and bring such practices to a halt.

I look forward to hearing back from you as soon as possible on this matter regarding what course of action you intend to pursue. I will share your response with the AANHCP leadership in what is sure to become a growing and vocal grassroots movement against what this paper correctly identifies as equine medical torture.

Sincerely yours,

[Your name]
[Your contact information]

cc: AANHCP
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