



What's in This Newsletter:
-Flexion Tests in a Pre-Purchase Exam
-Treating Summer Sores
-Getting Paperwork Organized for an FEI Competition Part 2

Understanding the Role of Flexion Tests in a Pre-Purchase Exam

If you are a horse owner, you are probably familiar with flexion tests. Most pre-purchase and lameness exams involve a vet performing flexion tests on the horse. This type of test involves a veterinarian applying stress or pressure to various joints for a brief period of time and then immediately trotting the horse away. While the horse is trotting, the vet observes the effects of the flexion test on the horse's gait and movement. This type of evaluation can reveal discomfort or weakness that may not be present during a normal jog.

Although flexion tests are very common, there are certain drawbacks and considerations that should be taken into account. We spoke with Dr. Scott Swerdlin, President of Palm Beach Equine Clinic, to learn more about flexion tests and factors that should be considered when performing them, especially for a pre-purchase exam.



Dr. Scott Swerdlin, President of Palm Beach Equine Clinic, discusses what factors of flexion tests should be considered during a pre-purchase exam. Photo by Jump Media

At what point in a pre-purchase exam do you utilize flexion tests?

A pre-purchase exam starts before you begin the flexion tests, and what you learn about the horse at the beginning of the appointment should be taken into account once you start flexing them. The first thing I do is look at the horse in the stall. I observe the horse to see if they have any habits such as being a stall weaver or cribber. All of those small details are very important. Next, I want to watch the horse come out of the stall and observe how they are walking. It is important to watch the horse walk in a straight line. While watching, I try to get down close to the ground so I can see the horse's conformation. I ask the horse to bend a couple of times to the right and a couple of times to the left. I will then put my hands on the horse and check them all over. I check the jugular on both sides to make sure there are no problems there and then run my hands down all four legs. After a period of time, you get pretty good at being able to perform a thorough exam with just your hands. They do not teach that as much in veterinary school now, but I try to teach that at Palm Beach Equine. After that, I pick the leg up and palpate all the soft tissue structures individually on all four legs. Once those tasks are completed, I am ready for the flexion tests. Before the flexion tests even start, I already have a pretty good idea of the horse. The flexion tests are just one small piece of the puzzle.



Before starting flexion tests in a pre-purchase exam, it is important to thoroughly evaluate the horse. Photo courtesy of Palm Beach Equine Clinic

How are flexion tests used in a lameness exam?

When you are doing a lameness exam, flexions can be very helpful because they give you a general area to concentrate on. For example, if the horse is lame in the left fore, you would start your flexions with the coffin joint, then the fetlock joint, then the carpus, then the shoulder, and then go to the back leg. When you are doing flexion tests in a lameness exam you are watching for an increased response or sensitivity to help pinpoint a certain problem area. Then you start doing local anesthetic blocks to make sure that that's not where the horse is lame.

Would you say flexion tests are more useful in a lameness exam than they are in a pre-purchase exam?

Yes. I think some veterinarians pay too much attention to flexion tests in a pre-purchase exam. It can interfere with a sale where the horse and rider are a good fit for each other. I would even say that it's not so fair to the horse, owner, or prospective buyer to place too much emphasis on flexion tests.

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Healthcare Reminder: Treating Equine Summer Sores

Summer heat is in full force and with high temperatures and humid conditions comes an elevated risk for equine summer sores. Flies thrive in these conditions, which can create many nagging problems for horses. One of the most serious problems are equine summer sores, which are medically known as habronemiasis, granular dermatitis, and jack sores.



Immediate and proper treatment is essential when dealing with summer sores. Photo courtesy of PBEC

Summer sores are an unfortunate yet common occurrence in areas with warmer climates, and a problem that Palm Beach Equine Clinic veterinarian Dr. Meredith Hustler treats often. According to Dr. Hustler, prevention is key, but proper and prompt treatment is paramount if a summer sore does emerge.

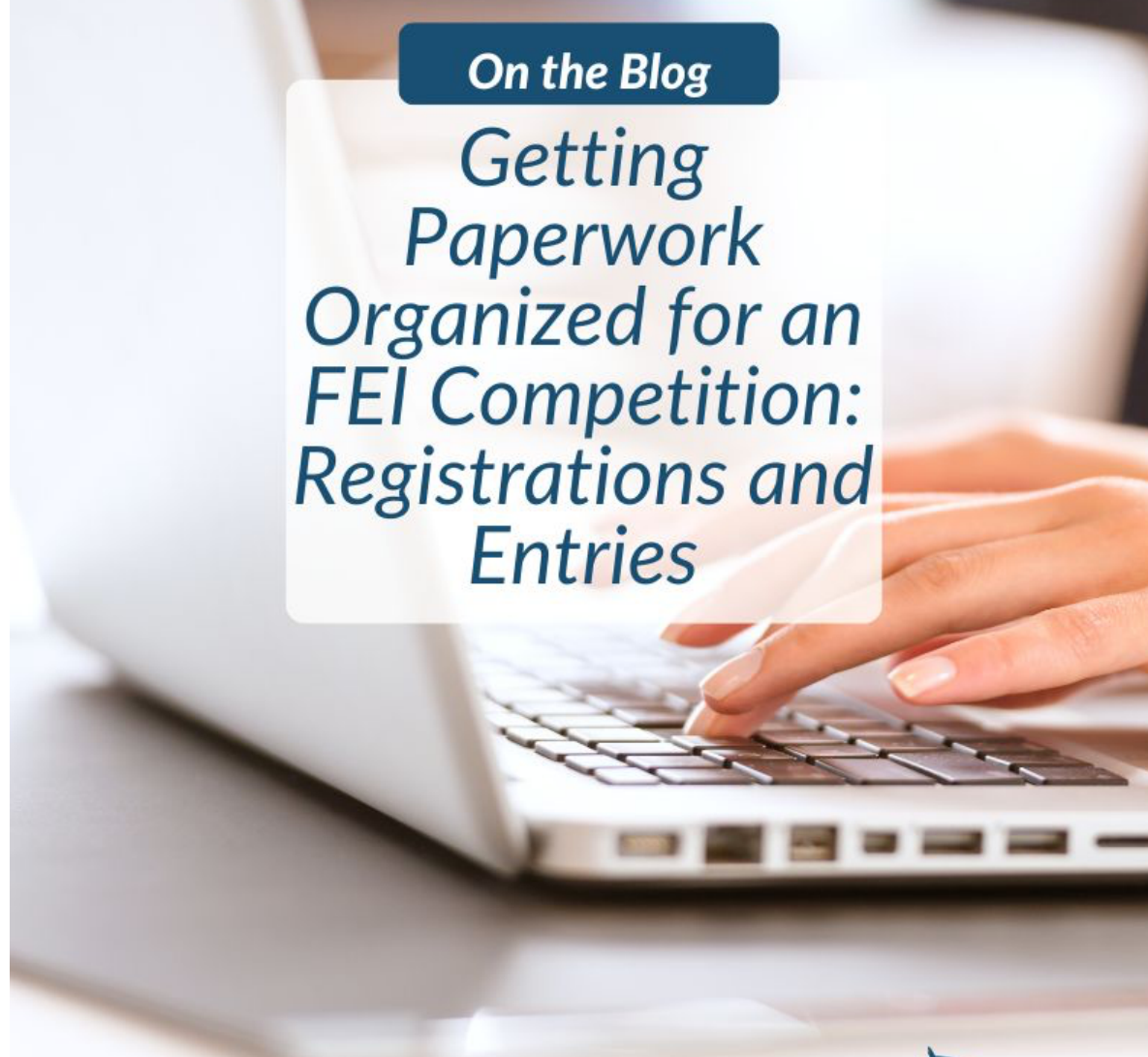
Understanding Summer Sores

Summer sores are lesions on the skin caused by the larvae of equine stomach worms called habronema. These worms in the horse's stomach produce eggs that pass through the digestive tract and are shed in the horse's feces. Barn flies typically gather around manure and ultimately collect the parasite's larvae on their extremities. Summer sores will occur when flies carrying the larvae deposit their eggs onto an open wound or the mucous membranes of a horse. This typically includes areas such as the prepuce, lower abdomen, corners of the eyes, and margins of the lips. The larvae cause an inflammatory reaction, often with discharge and the production of granulation tissue infected with larvae.

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Getting Paperwork Organized for an FEI Competition Part 2: Entries and Registration

From BarnManager



You're excited to participate in your upcoming Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI) designated competition, whether that be as a rider, groom, manager, or owner, and you've been charged with making sure the paperwork is organized. The horse's passport is ready to go, so what do you need to do now to actually enter the show? Entering an FEI show is a bit more complicated than a national-level competition, so it requires a little organization and some advanced planning of your team's show schedule. Read the first part of our FEI Paperwork blog [HERE](#).

Registrations

Rider USEF:

Similar to national competitions, it's important to make sure the rider's US Equestrian (USEF) membership is up to date. You should also be sure that they have completed their annual SafeSport training. Both items can be handled through USEF's website.

Rider FEI:

If the rider has never competed in an FEI designated show, they will need to apply for an FEI registration number. This usually takes a few business days to process but is an important step to handle well in advance of the show in order to accomplish the other parts of the entry process. A rider's initial FEI registration and annual renewal can be completed through the USEF portal's Membership Dashboard. Be sure to look out for the confirmation email, so you can be certain everything is in order.

Horse USEF:

Horses with U.S. ownership must have lifetime USEF memberships (not just annual recordings) in order to be eligible for FEI competitions. You should make sure to confirm this status on USEF's website.

Horse FEI:

Horses also need to be registered annually with the FEI. Like rider registrations and renewals, this can be handled through the rider's Membership Dashboard on USEF's website. Once a horse is registered, you will need to add it to the "Commonly Ridden Horses" list through the rider's Athlete Dashboard in order to be able to enter it in any competitions.

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