



News and Updates

First Equine has officially been open and serving the Gulf Coast for one year! We would like to thank all the clients that have allowed us to care for their equine companions. We look forward to continued growth and service in 2018!

Congratulations to the winners of our Countdown to Christmas giveaway! Give us a call to redeem those services won.

Dr. Patrick First will be teaching veterinary students at the AAEP dental course at Mississippi State University Jan 12-14. Dr. Brittany First will be available for appointments and emergencies during that time.

We now offer the ability to perform upper and lower airway endoscopy as well as gastroscopy! We have a new 3 meter portable scope we can use directly at your farm.

First Equine is now on YouTube. Check out our new [YouTube](#) channel here. We plan on doing more educational videos throughout the year.

Don't forget to follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)

Write us a [Google review](#) here.

Visit our Website

Upcoming Events

Client Education Seminar on ~Colic~

Stay tuned to Facebook for the date and location! Our location will be different due to construction at the Archer center.

February is dental awareness month

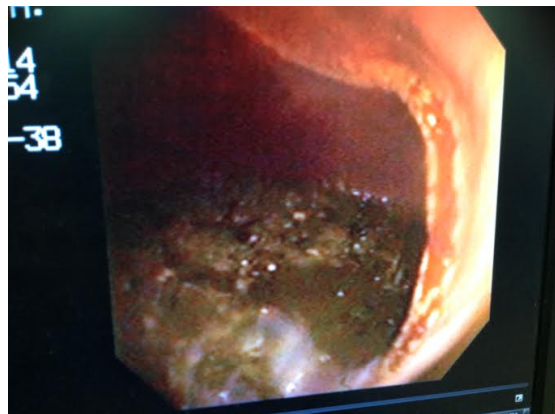
10% off oral exams and floats



Service Spotlight

Gastroscopy

Equine gastric ulcer syndrome is common among performance horses. However this disease process can be difficult to definitively diagnose without the use of gastroscopy. Roughly 60% of show horses will be affected by gastric ulceration. Clinical signs of horses affected by gastric ulcers include the following: mild colic signs, not finishing grain meals, behavior change, aggression, teeth grinding and poor performance.



The gastroscopy procedure requires the patient to be fasted for 18-24 hrs prior to examination. The gastroscope is passed through the nose, down the esophagus and into the stomach. Once in the stomach the glandular and nonglandular stomach can be evaluated visually for signs of ulceration.

Give us a call if you suspect gastric ulcers in your horse.



JLo's Success Story

JLo is an 8 year old quarter horse mare owned by Christy Roberts who was seen last summer by Dr. Brittany First for not being right in her hindend. She's used for western rodeo events and had done very well until last spring. Her turns and timing were off. Upon examination, JLo was not overtly lame in the hindend, but seemed to have trouble on tight circles and had some proprioceptive deficits (not knowing where her feet were). Dr. Brittany performed a neurological examination and discovered JLo was very unsteady and weak on her hindend when her tail was pulled-almost being pulled over! The rest of her neurologic examination was normal and she was not sensitive to neck or back palpation. This prompted us to test JLo for Equine Protozoal Myeloencephalitis-EPM.

EPM is a neurological disease that affects horses. It is caused by two protozoans, most commonly *Sarcocystis neurona*, and much less commonly, *Neospora hughesi*. These parasites are mostly carried by opossums and are excreted in their feces, however, raccoons, skunks, cats, and armadillos can also harbor these parasites. Horses become infected when they ingest contaminated feces from infected animals. Once infected, the parasite attacks the horse's nervous system. The clinical symptoms of EPM can vary quite a bit with common signs being: ataxia (weakness), incoordination, asymmetrical muscle atrophy, paralysis, and even recumbency. The symptoms vary depending on how many parasites are in the horse's nervous system and also where in the nervous system they are located.

To diagnose EPM a blood or spinal fluid sample is submitted to a lab to test for the presence of antibodies to these parasites. JLo's test turned out positive for both *S. neurona* AND *N. hughesi*-her titers were very, very high for both species. We had a diagnosis of EPM! We started JLo on a tapering dose of dexamethasone to help with inflammation in her nervous system and an anti-protozoal medication, Protazil, to kill the parasites. She was also started on a high dose of vitamin E supplement as an antioxidant to help support her nervous system.

We are happy to announce that after aggressively treating JLo for EPM, she is back to work and doing fantastic! Her timing and turns have improved and she has regained her confidence in her work.



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