

Prevention & management of Pastern Dermatitis

Mud fever in horses is a common and often frustrating problem. Also known as pastern dermatitis, scratches, greasy heel and dew poisoning, this skin condition affects the heel and pastern area of horses. It can range from mild irritation to a severely painful and swollen limb, if left unchecked.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

Mud fever can affect any horse during a wet season. Those housed in wet and/or dirty conditions will be especially susceptible. Improperly cleaned stalls and muddy paddocks with manure or standing water are breeding grounds for infection (which can be bacterial, fungal, viral or parasitic in nature). The constant exposure to moisture irritates the horse's skin, creating entry points for any opportunistic infection to invade. It is said that horses with white socks or light-colored legs may be more prone to mud fever, and for whatever reason it seems to affect the hind legs more than the front legs. In addition, horses with heavy feathering on their legs may be more commonly affected, since the hair will trap moisture, dirt and manure.

As with anything, it is much better to prevent mud fever or catch it early on. Look for irritated, crusty or oozing areas on your horse's skin. If mud fever goes unnoticed, it may progress to limb swelling and lameness or more serious problems. Mud fever can be quite painful for the horse, and managing it can prove tricky in some cases, especially if you have a sensitive animal.

MANAGEMENT AND PREVENTION

The first step is good prevention. Keep your horse clean and use a good antibacterial wash followed by a conditioner massaged into the coat. ZYMOX® Equine Defense has a line of products to manage and prevent a wide range of bacterial and fungal infections and all the ZYMOX products feature a patented enzyme system providing antibacterial and antifungal benefits. If mud fever develops, it is not necessary to remove the scabs because ZYMOX works differently than topical antibiotic preparations. The area can be lightly rinsed with water to remove any large particulates, patted dry and the ZYMOX Spray applied. The enzymes interact with the organic matter to initiate the enzyme activity. This is a real benefit because most horses become skittish to the touch. If the condition worsens, it is important to have your horse seen by a veterinarian.

Once a horse has developed mud fever, he may be more prone to it again down the road. Try to prevent prolonged exposure to muddy, wet areas. Keep your horse's legs and anything that goes on his legs (wraps, boots) clean and dry. If your horse has feathers, pay extra attention to his leg hygiene. Zymox.com

Avoiding the Overuse of Antibiotics

Sometimes antibiotics are warranted; however, there are alternatives such as antimicrobial enzymes. All enzymes have their own unique properties and when certain enzymes are combined, as in the patented LP3 Enzyme System, they can pack a powerful antimicrobial punch. Gentle and non-toxic, these enzymes are naturally derived, 100% safe, and have been recommended by veterinarians for over 18 years to help manage topical infections in horses, dogs, cats, and exotic animals.

Broad spectrum, tested effective, including:

- *Pseudomonas*
- *Malassezia pachydermatitis*
- Methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*
- *Staphylococcus aureus*
- *Candida albicans*
- *Proteus mirabilis*
- *Escherichia coli*
- *Streptococcus intermedius*
- *Streptococcus pyogenes*