



TFB is very proud to announce that Dr. Scott Hay has been elected to the Board of Directors of the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP). This is a great honor for Dr. Hay and a great honor for TFB. We wish to offer him our sincerest congratulations.

## OUR WINTER VENUES

It's time to welcome many of you back to Florida for the winter! We are also "on the move" as several of our veterinarians are returning for the winter season of racing at Gulfstream Park. Our Gulfstream team consists once again of Dr. Tom Brokken, Dr. Jackie Shellow and Dr. Sara Langsam, and you will also see some new faces as we welcome two excellent veterinarians to our staff - Dr. Martine Rodgers and Dr. Bonnie Comerford. Dr. Rodgers and Dr. Comerford will be dividing their time between Gulfstream and Calder.

Palm Meadow Training Center will be "home" again to Dr. Luis Castro, Dr. April Downey and Dr. Sarah Barr. Dr. Heidi Thomas will be working at Payson Park as we return to that location once again.

Completing the list of our Florida veterinarians is our Calder team consisting of Dr. Scott Hay, Dr. Bruce Solomon and Dr. Joe Zerilli.

Our year-round Mid-Atlantic veterinarians are Dr. Luis Benitez and Dr. Tom Reid who will be taking care of your horses at Delaware Park and Fair Hill Training Center.

We are all looking forward to working with you and your horses during the coming months.

### Where You Will Find Us This Winter

#### Florida

##### Gulfstream Park

Dr. Tom Brokken 954-732-2007  
 Dr. Jackie Shellow 954-732-2009  
 Dr. Sara Langsam 954-732-2001  
 Dr. Martine Rodgers 954-732-2010  
 Dr. Bonnie Comerford 954-732-2002

##### Palm Meadows

Dr. Luis Castro 954-732-2005  
 Dr. April Downey 954-732-6813  
 Dr. Sarah Barr 954-732-2006  
  
Payson Park  
 Dr. Heidi Thomas 954-732-9378

##### Calder

Dr. Scott Hay 954-732-2003  
 Dr. Bruce Solomon 954-732-2011  
 Dr. Joe Zerilli 954-732-2008

#### Mid-Atlantic

##### Delaware Park

Dr. Luis Benitez 443-553-2870

##### Fair Hill Training Center

Dr. Tom Reid 443-309-6850

# TFB FROM START TO FINISH

## Teigland, Franklin, & Brokken, DVMs

### Client Communications

Quarterly  
 Newsletter  
 November 2008  
 Vol. 2 No. 4

Veterinarians who work on the racetrack have many challenges in taking care of their clients and patients. Not least among these is being able to effectively communicate to the owners of our equine patients on day-to-day care. These difficulties are complicated by the fact that few owners have the opportunity to have face-to-face interaction with their veterinarian. The veterinarian is usually hired by the trainer of the horse with little or no input from the owner. Owners of the horses are rarely present at the racetrack on a daily basis to have personal interaction with the veterinarian regarding treatments and overall care. This often leads to incomplete or insufficient communication between the veterinarian and the owner regarding the treatment and condition of their horse, and the feeling by some owners that they are not being fully informed. In most cases, it is really no one's fault that things aren't communicated well. Many times, it is just that details get lost in translation.

So how can we change this? When we started publishing this newsletter, one of our main goals was to find a way to have some type of effective communication with those of you whom we never see. In the past, the only time many of you ever had any correspondence from us was when we sent you a bill. We can imagine how impersonal that feels. Creating our newsletter was one small way for us to reach out to our "absentee" clients by providing you with information on timely topics of interest. We also felt that adding profiles of our doctors to the newsletters would at least give you a face to associate with the doctor's name.

I would like to propose taking this a step farther. Previously, in several issues of the newsletter, we have listed the cell phone numbers of all of our veterinarians according to the location where they work. These phone numbers are for your use. If you have any

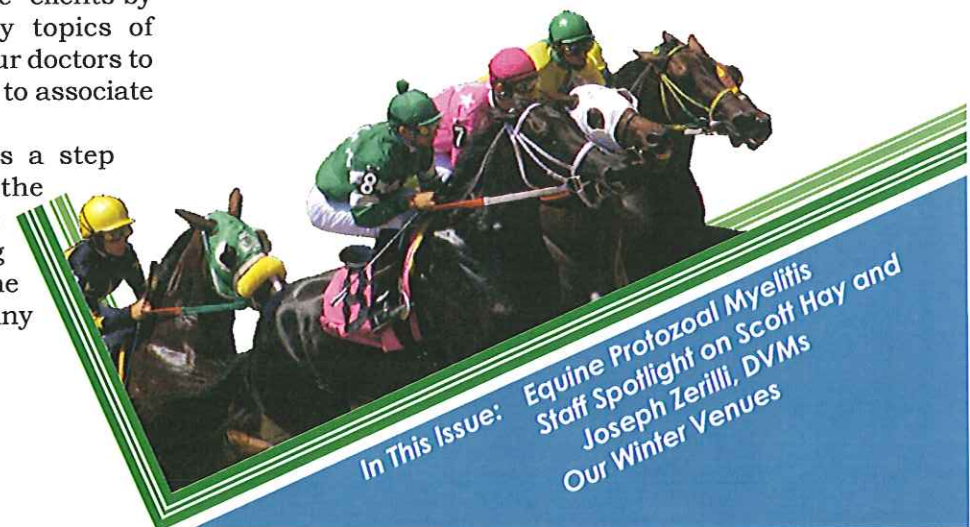
questions, I am personally encouraging each and every one of you to directly contact the doctor who is primarily caring for your horse. Of course we are busy, but we have time at some point during the day to answer questions and openly communicate with you about the care of your horse. That is the least we can do.

It is a priority for us to have ways for you to communicate with our veterinarians, and we will include their contact information in every issue of our quarterly newsletter. You will also find contact information for our veterinarians and also for our office staff on our website - [www.tfb-horsevets.com](http://www.tfb-horsevets.com). If you have difficulty getting a call back, then you can call me directly, and I will make sure that the veterinarian taking care of your horse contacts you.

Communication with the veterinarian has always been your right as an owner. My purpose in writing this is to encourage better and more timely communication. This will make taking care of your horses much more enjoyable for us and hopefully for each of you as well.

Good luck in all your racing endeavors.

Scott A. Hay, DVM, President  
 954-732-2003  
[shay@tfb-horsevets.com](mailto:shay@tfb-horsevets.com)



In This Issue: Equine Protozoal Myelitis  
 Staff Spotlight on Scott Hay and  
 Joseph Zerilli, DVMs  
 Our Winter Venues

# Equine Protozoal Myelitis - The Other Kind of Wobbler Joseph Zerilli, D.V.M.

Equine Protozoal Myelitis (EPM) is a disease of the central nervous system in horses and is caused by a single-celled parasitic organism broadly known as a protozoan. Although the animal phylum represents many species of unicellular protozoa, the *Sarcocystis* and *Neospora* variety can infect and affect horses in an almost diabolical manner.

The horse is infected by ingesting feedstuffs that have been contaminated by the manure of an opossum. The opossum manure contains the infective sporocyst (a sac-like structure, produced by protozoa, which houses the reproductive DNA). Normally in nature, an intermediate host mammal like an armadillo, skunk, raccoon or occasional cat would more appropriately ingest the sporocyst. Upon eating the flesh of these intermediate hosts by the opossum, the infective sporocyst will complete its life cycle in the intestinal tract of the opossum producing yet another generation of infective parasites passed within the feces. If the infective opossum droppings contaminate feedstuffs eaten by horses in sufficient amounts, an infection may result. The disease that follows may be insidious and develop quickly over several weeks or slowly over months. Although little is known about the incubation period of EPM, what is known is that the equine's immune system and the factors that affect it, such as stress, diet, management and environment, seem to play an important role in resistance and recovery.

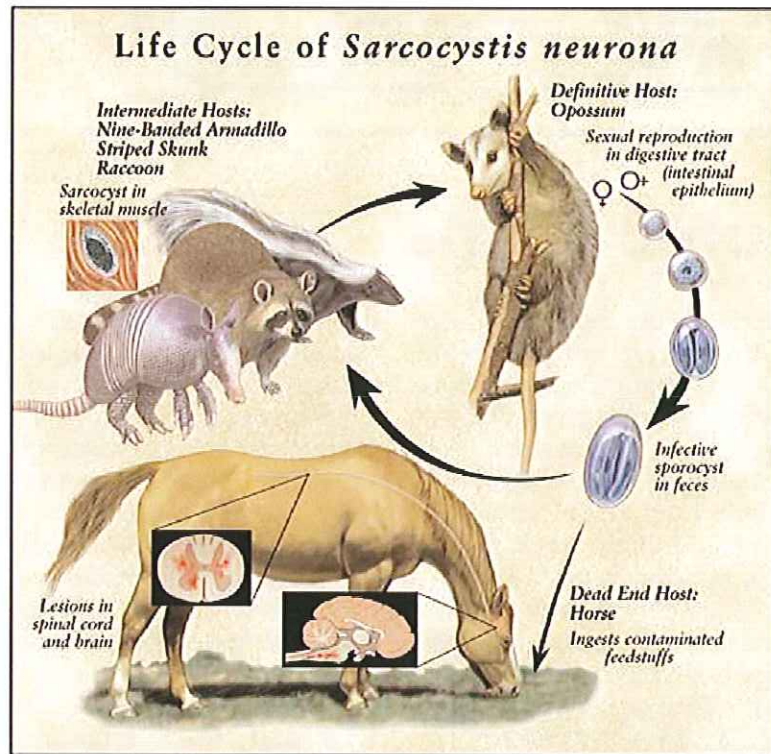
EPM is naturally occurring in all the Americas. The

prevalence directly correlates with the range of the opossum. Exposure in some populations of horses can be high and one study found it to be as high as 60% by measuring antibodies of horses living in the states of California, Colorado, Florida, Kentucky, Missouri, Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Fortunately, not all exposed horses will succumb and develop symptoms of disease. Statistics also suggest that most affected horses will be 4-5 years old, although every age group is at risk as is exemplified in racing populations of young horses.

Horses are a "dead-end host" meaning that the protozoan cannot complete its life cycle within the horse nor can equines pass the disease among themselves in any way. However, once consumed, the protozoan sporocysts become nasty critters that enter the equine intestinal blood supply and travel to the nervous system's spinal cord and brain, all the while replicating, causing damage, inflammation and pathologic havoc. If the cranial nerves are infected, a drooping lip, drooling and dropping feed may be seen. When the nerves of the large

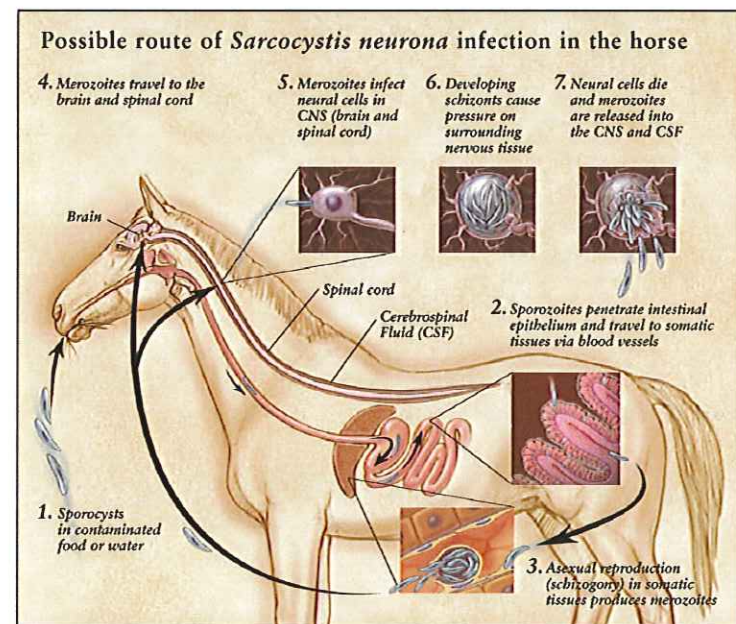
muscles are stricken, then wasting or atrophy may be seen in the gluteus or rump.

Most often a combination of symptoms occur as the organism infects the spinal cord, giving rise to gait abnormalities and lack of coordination which appear peculiar when compared to other non-neurologic lameness conditions. In severe cases, horses may become recumbent and unable to rise.



Fortunately, veterinarians today are well educated regarding the manifestations of this debilitating disease that until the early 1990's was relatively poorly understood (around the time the causative organism was identified). Testing methods, utilizing blood serum and spinal fluid in the living patient, have also improved in accuracy and availability in recent years. Improved laboratory tests are currently being developed.

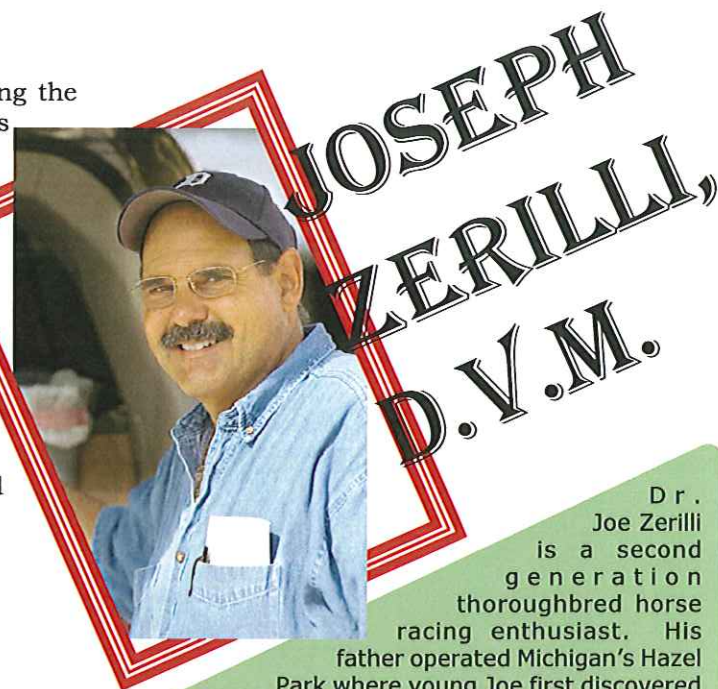
As is true with all diseases, successful treatment of EPM relies upon early diagnosis and application of medical management. Proper diagnosis is crucial and must be differentiated from other neurological diseases, which in racing animals usually means Equine Herpes Virus, Eastern, Western or West Nile Equine Encephalomyelitis, and Cervical Stenotic Myelopathy (classic wobbler syndrome). Diagnosis is made by blood testing for antibodies and radiographs of the neck.



Treatments in previous years depended upon anti-protozoan drugs borrowed from the food animal and human medicine fields, which included trimethoprim potentiated sulfa drugs combined with an anti-malarial drug and/or a variety of animal coccidiostats. These regimens often had variable results, were difficult to administer, hard to obtain and proposed liabilities to the patient and veterinary practitioner alike.

Currently the FDA has approved two medicines labeled for treatment of EPM. These are Marquis (ponazuril) and Navigator (nitazoximide). Both medical preparations are available in paste form, are administered over a 28-day period and show similar efficacy rates removing the organism from the affected horses. Of the two however, Marquis (first to be FDA approved) appears to have fewer and less severe adverse reactions, and in fact, is not required to post a warning box on its labeling that warns of possible death due to enterocolitis, as does Navigator.

Supportive therapy should also be provided as ancillary treatment of EPM in order to augment drug treatment in returning horses to a healthy condition. These therapies include DMSO (shown effective for CNS inflammation), NSAID anti-inflammatory (see Dr. Castro's informative article in TFB's August 2008 quarterly newsletter), anti-oxidant vitamins (Folic acid and Vitamin E), as well as immune modulators, equine ulcer medicines and acupuncture treatment. Proper nutrition utilizing clean feeds and hays from reputable mills and suppliers, good track or barn management aimed at discouraging opossum presence, and prohibition of immune suppressive drugs or stress inducing practices by personnel all seem to play a role in the elimination of this devastating disease. ❖



**Dr. Joseph Zerilli, D.V.M.**

Dr. Joseph Zerilli is a second generation thoroughbred horse racing enthusiast. His father operated Michigan's Hazel Park where young Joe first discovered his passion for horses and horse racing.

As a new graduate, Dr. Zerilli started practicing at Calder Race Course in Miami, Florida in 1984. He left private practice for regulatory medicine from 1991-1993 as the State Veterinarian for the Division of Pari-mutuel Wagering in Florida, and as a result, regulated not only the horses at Calder, Hialeah, Gulfstream and Pompano Park but also the many racing dogs at Florida's dog tracks. During this time Dr. Zerilli extended his practice to include other sport and pleasure horses and animals at a local Ft. Lauderdale circus.

After 1993, Dr. Zerilli joined another local racetrack practice for over eight years before settling down with old friends at Teigland, Franklin and Brokken, DVMs in 2003 to help develop its Mid-Atlantic division.

Dr. Zerilli also holds a Bachelor of Science in Animal Husbandry from Michigan State University where the focus was on horses and cattle. He is interested in overall wellness and believes in most modern modalities of treatment including acupuncture, chiro-practic, massage and nutritional supplementation. He enjoys minor surgeries that can be performed at the barn like Llewellyn procedures, castrations, caslicks and laceration repair. He is vigilant with veterinary regulation and feels that horse health and fair play is paramount to successful racing in the future and that pragmatic, intelligent regulation must include the horsemen and women, veterinarians and industry specialists.

Dr. Zerilli is a member of the American Association of Equine Practitioners, American Veterinary Medical Association and the Florida Association of Equine Practitioners. In his spare time, he enjoys cooking for his wife of 28 years, Marcia, and their five children, boating, trail bike riding and fishing.

## SCOTT A. HAY, D.V.M.

Dr. Scott Hay has had a lifelong interest in both horses and veterinary medicine. His father is a retired veterinarian in Kansas who still raises and races American Quarter Horses. As a teenager, Scott competed in the roping events at local rodeos.

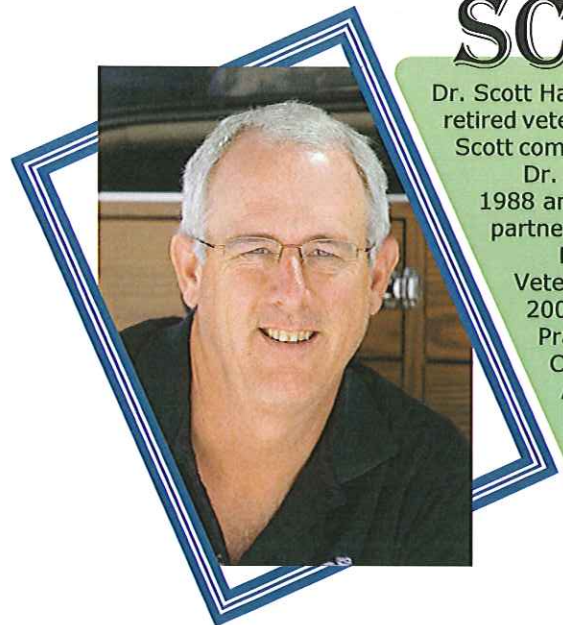
Dr. Hay graduated from the Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine in 1988 and joined Teigland, Franklin and Brokken later that year. In 1990, he became a full partner in the practice, and since 2004, he has served as its President and Managing Partner.

Dr. Hay is a member of the American Veterinary Medical Association, the Florida Veterinary Medical Association, and the Florida Association of Equine Practitioners. In 2008, he was elected to the Board of Directors of the American Association of Equine Practitioners. Dr. Hay also sits on the AAEP's Professional Ethics and Conduct Committee and has served as the facilitator of the Purchase Examination at Public Auction Forum. Currently, Dr. Hay is also participating as a member of the Grayson-Jockey Club Research Advisory Committee.

His primary interests lie in lameness evaluations and purchase examinations.

Dr. Hay particularly enjoys consulting with and advising clients on their potential purchases at thoroughbred auctions.

When not evaluating horses, Dr. Hay enjoys playing golf, raising his own horses (both Thoroughbred and Quarter Horses), and spending time with his wife, Darlene and their three daughters, Baylee, Lindsay and Kylee.



On Page 4: Our Winter Venues Where You Will Find Us This Winter A Special AAEP Announcement