Preface

Emergency and Critical Care

Ten years have passed since Dr Pamela Wilkins edited the last issue of *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Equine Practice* with the title, “Critical Care for All Ages.” Much has changed since that 2004 issue, and the field of equine critical care has continued to grow. This has been reflected in the slow, but steady growth of large animal specialists within the American College of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care. These *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Equine Practice* articles provide a unique perspective from textbook information as they represent the most up-to-date information from leaders in the field of equine critical care medicine and surgery. The goal of this issue is not to present a comprehensive overview of equine critical care and emergency topics, but rather to touch on highlights of critical care medicine that have not been recently reviewed, while not excluding some key, clinically relevant topics that may be immediately applied in the field. Unique topics that may not be found elsewhere, such as gunshot wounds in the horse as well as more advanced topics pertaining to physiology, systemic inflammatory response syndrome, and hemorrhage and blood transfusions, are also covered.

Among the more common conditions encountered by the emergency equine veterinarian are colic and neonatal triage. New information regarding pathogenesis, diagnostics, and therapy is available, so these and closely related topics are covered in depth. With the relatively recent RECOVER initiative pertaining primarily to small animal CPR, we felt it was appropriate to review the most recent and relevant techniques in equine CPR. This topic is further supported with a general review of triage in the neonatal foal as well as articles specific to management of neonatal sepsis and use and interpretation of blood lactate measurements in foals.

Our colic coverage includes a beautifully illustrated review of abdominal ultrasound; an article dedicated to the diagnostic workup and making the decision for referral; a review of the latest evidence-based information on crystalloid and colloid therapy; the use of lactate as a diagnostic tool; and diagnosis, pathogenesis, and treatment of coagulopathies.
Coverage of the topic of critical care in the horse would not be complete without a review of infection control in equine critical care settings. Critically ill equine patients are particularly susceptible to health care–associated infections. The challenges of infection control as well as risks associated with management of critical care patients are covered along with guidelines to improve infection control in these high-risk settings.

We hope this issue on equine critical care provides an optimal combination of practical information and cutting-edge research to meet the needs of all veterinarians that are involved in the care of critically ill equine patients. A special thank-you is extended to the individual authors for their outstanding coverage of their respective topics. Each author is considered a leader in their respective field and we cannot thank them enough for their time and dedication to their contributions to this issue. We would also like to extend a sincere thank-you to Dr A. Simon Turner, for giving us the opportunity to collaborate on this edition dedicated to the equine critical care patient.

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