

Supplements

Supplements are a very interesting subject and can be a very expensive cost of Equine care.

My question about supplements is very simple: Is the Horse deficient of some vitamin or mineral? Is the Horse stalled so much he cannot forage for the food stuffs he needs? Is the water supply "natural"? Or is it "city water"? Horses are not meant to drink perfectly clean water. They actually need small amounts of algae and other trace minerals in their water.

Hoof supplements are a big dollar "new" fad a lot of horseshoeing farriers promote, either because there is profit involved or they just do not understand what makes up healthy feet. Biotin is generally what hoof supplements contain. While it is very true Biotin is one of the vitamins the Horse system uses to grow hoof wall, it must be understood too much of a good thing is just as harmful as not enough.

Hoof cracks and "flakey" soles are not proof the Horse is Biotin deficient. There are hundreds of other reasons for this hoof condition, one of which could very well be poor farrier work. Thus "pouring Biotin" to this animal is not going to "fix" the problem and may, in fact, increase the amount and size of these cracks. (See Seedy Toe & Treatment)

Biotin is just one of many supplements on the market sold to "fix" one thing or another. My personal belief is unless the Horse is deficient in some mineral or vitamin, then he or she should not be given supplements. I tend to look to the cause of a particular health problem, not the treatment of a symptom.

Take humans and aspirin. When we get headaches we take an aspirin. Why? Are we aspirin deficient? Probably not. There was something else that caused our headache. Identifying what that something is is the first "true" step in treating a headache. And once that something has been identified and treated, headaches are no longer a source of pain. These are things a lot of Horse owners just do not have the time for, so they treat the symptom. The sad part of this is many Horse professionals only treat the symptoms, as well, and they should know better and be willing to invest the time to practice better investigative skills into discovering the underlying cause.



David Qualls
Shoe - Less Farrier Services
678-314-0381
www.davidqualls.net