

Hey Neighbor



For The Love Of Horses

By Frank J. Buchman

Benign sarcoids complex horse problem

Sarcoids are a complicated growth on horses.

"Equine sarcoids are benign tumors that tend to re-occur," defined Dr. Tom Jernigan of Council Grove.

Sometimes confused with warts, sarcoids often are solid roundish, fibrous lumps that can vary from flat on the skin to pencil eraser size to being larger than a baseball.

"There is a wet form and a dry form of sarcoids," Jernigan said. "The wet form is usually more of a problem growth, while there is little consequence with the dry form which stays flat on the skin and doesn't grow a lot."

Research has been inconclusive and is continuing about the cause and treatment of sarcoids.

"They are a complicated problem on horses, and there are a lot of theories about the cause and how to treat them," he said.

Although they can be on any part of a horse, sarcoids typically are found around the eyes and on the legs, trunk and head of an infected horse. They tend to arise in areas that have a history of trauma or wounding.

"While warts are a virus," he continued, "sarcoids are a non-malignant tumor that is not contagious from one horse to another."

Each case is different, and methods of treatment are varied. What works on one horse may be ineffective on another. Some veterinarians tend to shy away from treating the problem, because of the high possibility of the sarcoid returning

in a larger form.

"I have done several different treatments on sarcoids and effectiveness has been varied," Jernigan said. "I haven't found anything that works the same every time, but I have had some success."

Simply surgically extracting a sarcoid from the skin is typically not successful. "That often seems to stimulate rapid growth of the sarcoid," Jernigan contended.

However, he has had some success removing the entire sarcoid, making sure the core is out of the flesh, with a wide margin around the sore. The skin is then

pulled together and sutured.

"Most of these cases have done well, but I have had some sarcoids that have returned," Jernigan clarified.

His best success in treating sarcoids has been by using a product called Xterra.

"This is an immune stimulant in a herbal paste formulated by Larson Laboratories at Fort Collins, Colo.," Jernigan said.

The product has been used successfully in Jernigan's practice for about five

years, after he first heard about it from a former classmate specializing in equine medicine.

"I really don't know why it works," he said, "but I've had about 80 percent success rate applying Xterra for five days after denuding or roughing up the sarcoid."

The localized immune response will make the area around the sarcoid tender for several days during the healing process that requires two or three weeks.

In one specific case, Jernigan said he treated a sarcoid several times before curing the problem. "It came back twice, but after the third treatment, the whole core of the sarcoid just fell out," the veterinarian explained.

There are other methods of treatment, some which are still experimental, and additional ones that have effectiveness similar to Jernigan's.

Injecting an immune

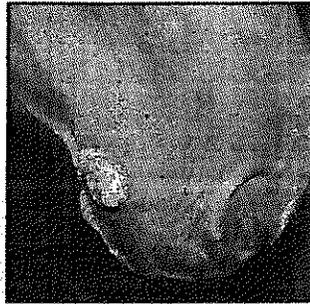
stimulant into a sarcoid will sometimes eliminate the problem. In a personal experience with a sarcoid treated in this method, the first injections did no good, but the second treatment was effective, leaving a scar on the horse's wither where the sarcoid had been.

Cryotherapy is the application of intense cold to the tumor. Over the period of several days, the frozen tissue will fall off, leaving a wound that typically heals uneventfully.

A carbon dioxide laser, thermal device, may also be employed to excise the sarcoid.

Chemotherapy may entail application of a systemic anti-cancer drug into the tumor. Several injections over a few weeks are usually necessary.

Radiation therapy involves implanting radioactive pellets into the masses. It usually has a high success rate, but is limited by the logistics that require isolation of the horse for a period of time after the pellets are implanted.



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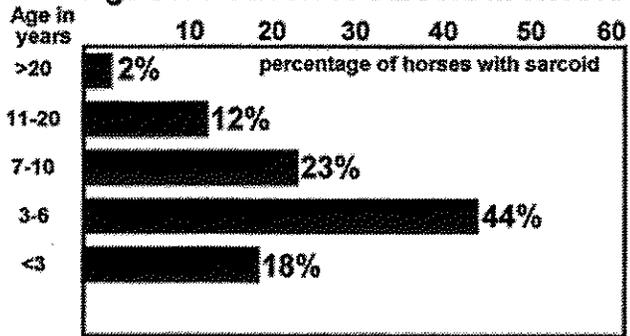
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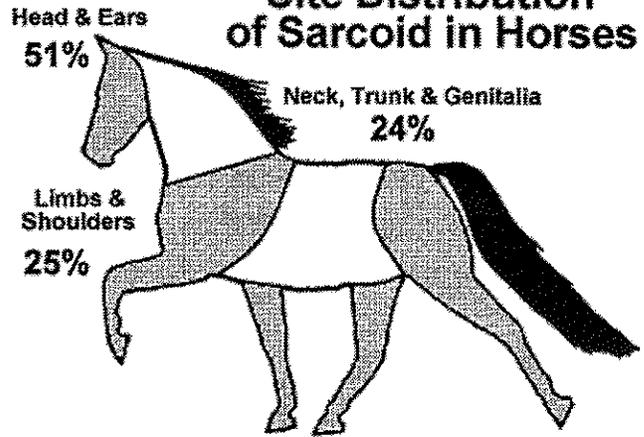
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Age Distribution of Sarcoid in Horses

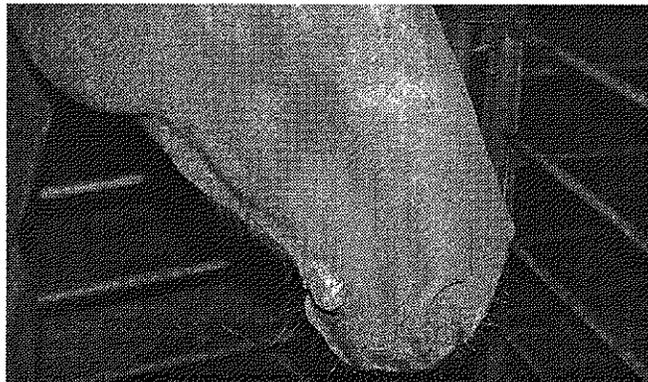


Research done at the University of Kentucky found that 44 percent of sarcoids occur in horses three to six years of age and 85 percent in animals ten years of age or less.

Site Distribution of Sarcoid in Horses



Studies at the University of Kentucky indicated that 51 percent of sarcoids occur on head and ears, 25 percent on limbs and shoulders and 24 percent neck, trunk and genitalia.



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