



Join us for our next Junior Vet Club  
**January 21, 2020**



**Schedule a haul-in appointment!**

We are located at:

**2404 North Kerr Ave, Wilmington, NC 28405**

**Phone:** (901) 792-6001

**Email:** [office@reaganequine.com](mailto:office@reaganequine.com)



### **Upcoming Events:**

Dates to be announced  
on Facebook

**An Open House to  
check out our new  
facility**

**Our Annual  
Junior Vet Camp  
(June 2020)**

### ***Next Meeting...***

**Junior Vet  
Club Meeting  
will be held on  
January 21  
5:30 - 7:30 pm**

# **Is your horse coughing?**

## *Respiratory problems in the horse*

Heaves or inflammatory airway disease is an inflammatory and hyper-reactive condition of the lungs. It has been recently re-described as equine asthma syndrome due to its' similarity to human asthma. Equine asthma syndrome is further divided into two categories: inflammatory airway disease (IAD) and reactive airway obstruction (RAO).

## **Inflammatory**

## **Airway**

## **Disease:**

Inflammatory airway disease is generally noticed as increased respiratory effort

during work, coughing, and/or reluctance to work. These horses have a normal respiratory effort during rest.



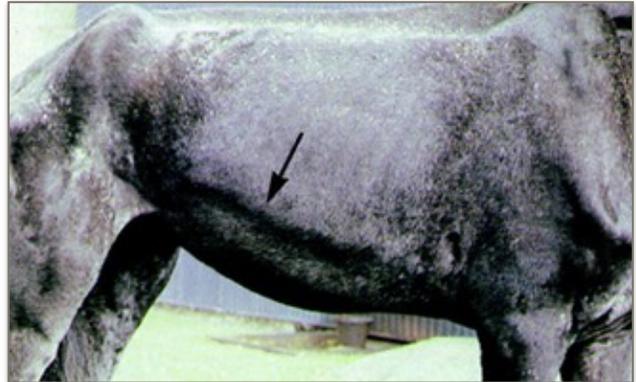
Treatment may involve many of the same things that are done treating RAO. The extent of the treatment depends on the severity of the signs. Due to the variety of options when treating it is best to discuss them after your horse has been examined by a veterinarian to find the best choice for your horse.

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# *Is your horse coughing? ... continued*

## Reactive Airway Obstruction:

Horses with reactive airway obstruction, or what is more traditionally known as “heaves,” have increased effort at rest. This disease process has allergic and inflammatory components. Many times these horses use abdominal respiratory muscles to help them breathe and the development of these muscles is the ‘heave line’ that can be visible on the lower abdomen



This disease generally gets worse at different times of the year when horses are exposed to more allergens. Many times horses are worse in dusty stabled conditions, and tend to show increased symptoms when in stalls or during feeding times. In the Southeastern states, symptoms can worsen when allergens in pastures increase in the late summer or fall.

RAO can be diagnosed by symptoms or with a bronchoalveolar lavage. A bronchoalveolar lavage allows for the types of inflammatory cells that are present in the lungs to be evaluated. Either way, it is important to rule out other differential diagnoses. A good physical exam, bloodwork, and, sometimes, endoscopy is used to differentiate RAO from other possible causes of increased respiratory effort such as pneumonia or upper airway dysfunction.

Treatment involves a multi-step approach. One of the most effective ways of decreasing the severity of symptoms involves reducing dust in the environment. The two main sources of dust in a normal barn environment are hay and bedding. One of the easiest ways to reduce dust is to soak hay before feeding. Hay can also be replaced with either a complete pelleted feed or a pelleted hay product such as timothy pellets. Straw bedding can be replaced with shavings, which is generally less dusty and less moldy.



There are two main types of medications used to treat RAO, corticosteroids and bronchodilators. These are used in different forms depending on the specific needs of the horse and how progressed the disease is. Controlling symptoms is best done with a combined effort of environmental management and medications as needed.

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