Second Congress of Equine Surgery, Geneva, Switzerland — 11th to 13th December, 1991

Reporter: F. Barrelet

THE SECOND CONGRESS of Equine Surgery held in Geneva was organised by Pierre Chuit. The meeting, now to be arranged on a biannual basis, attracted 400 practitioners from 22 countries.

Simultaneous translation allowed delegates to understand and participate in discussions conducted in French, German and English. The social programme was centred on the CSI-W Geneva, a qualifying leg for the showjumping world cup.

The theme of the Congress was lameness originating from the proximal limb and the back.

Day 1: the front limb and the back

Dr Schamhardt (Utrecht, Holland) discussed the biomechanics of the thoracic limb and Professor Denoix (Maison Alfort, France) reviewed diagnostic anaesthesia in the proximal limb.

Professor Ueltschi (University of Bern, Switzerland) discussed the value of combining scintigraphic and radiological techniques to reach a satisfactory diagnosis in 57 horses referred for lameness in the proximal limbs. He stated that lesions were seen more frequently in the shoulder area than in the radio-humeral region and that arthropathies, sprains and subchondral bone cysts form the vast majority of observed lesions.

Professor Auer (University of Zurich, Switzerland) discussed the management of carpal problems in horses and Dr Joanne Hardy (Ohio State University, USA) discussed the management of shoulder injuries. She emphasised the value of scintigraphy for early diagnosis of stress fractures of the humerus in Thoroughbreds in training. In another paper, Dr. Hardy addressed the topic of arthroscopy of the upper joints of the front leg. Dr Lauk (Neubulach, Germany) presented video footage (high speed film) demonstrating the influence of correct and incorrect hoof balance on the biomechanics of both front and hind limbs. The biomechanics of the hind limb were discussed by Dr Schamhardt (Utrecht, Holland).

Professor Leo Jeffcott (Cambridge University, UK) presented three excellent papers on protocol for examination of injuries to the thoraco-lumbar spine; the means of treatment and management of vertebral problems in the horse and clinical signs and radiographic diagnosis of 'wobbler' horse. The difficulties encountered by practitioners and pathologists in diagnosing back problems were clearly described.

Day 2: proximal lameness in the hind limb

Papers included descriptions of the functional anatomy and the biomechanics of the hock and stifle joints by Professor Denoix.

A practitioner's approach to hind limb lameness was presented by Dr Frappier (Saint-Lazare, Canada).

A paper on the management and therapy of tarsus problems presented by Professor Auer incited avid discussion about the ethics of allowing horses to

compete in various equestrian disciplines following the intra-articular application of anti-inflammatory agents.

Results of scintigraphic and radiological examinations of normal hocks (270 horses) and those presenting abnormal findings (521 horses) and their correlation with clinical findings were discussed by Professor Ueltschi. He pointed out that the former diagnostic procedure should only be used in difficult cases in which lesions may be suspected in the plantar areas of the hock and can only be demonstrated infrequently with radiography.

Professor Hertsch's (University of Hannover, Germany) paper on arthroscopy of the talocrural joint in cases of osteochondritis dissecans interested many. Survey results show that 11 to 15 per cent of three-year-old halfbred horses have been diagnosed with this condition. The need for arthroscopic intervention in sound horses was discussed. It was suggested that surgery may be indicated in horses presenting a bog spavin and/or lameness. A

THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF HORSES IN WINTER

Every winter the British Horse Society Welfare Department receives requests for information on overwintering horses. A new booklet, *The Horse in Winter – Sheltering and Feeding*, provides a crisp and technical insight into the relationship between winter weather, shelter and nutrition for horses so that the health, welfare and management of horses kept for recreation can be improved.

Winter weather increases the climatic energy demand (CED) on horses kept outside. The most important characteristic of a horse in determining CED is its size. If CED exceeds energy production the horse will lose weight. CED can be reduced by weather protection — provided by rugs, natural or man-made shelters — and energy production, can be increased by higher levels of feeding. How can the owner work out the ratio? What provides more benefit, a good rug or a simple open-

fronted shelter? What type of horse is particularly in need of weather protection and extra feeding? How can the owner work out how much extra feed is required for maintenance over a range of bodyweights in a mild compared with a harsh winter? The booklet provides answers to all these questions.

The research on climatic energy was conducted by Dr James Bruce at the Centre for Rural Building in Aberdeen in consultation with the Aberdeen Association for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

The Horse in Winter is available from the BHS Welfare Department, BEC, Stoneleigh, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2LR (Tel: 0203 696697) on receipt of a stamped 9 x 6 inch self addressed envelope. Other useful seasonal titles are Winter Feeding: Comprehensive Requirements, Some Alternative Feeds and Winter Shelters, Needs, Hints on Construction.

lively debate ensued about the finer points of the definition of OCD, which apparently varies between the Anglo-Germano and Francophone worlds.

Dr Sue Dyson (Animal Health Trust, Newmarket, UK) discussed clinical injuries of the genual articulation, their diagnosis and treatment and arthroscopy of the stifle joint.

Professor Ueltschi discussed findings of 50 cases in which radiographic and scintigraphic examinations of stifle joints have been found. Bone scintigraphy, he stated, allows dramatically induced injuries to be localised prior to the lesions becoming radiographically demonstrable.

Dr Lasso (Hungary) described the Burdsall method of measuring unequally shaped hooves.

The relationship between farriers and veterinary surgeons was elucidated by the Geneva farrier, Bernard Duvernay.

In two papers dealing with muscular problems, Dr Frappier provided a practitioner's view of myositis in the dorsolumbar region and Professor Straub (University of Bern, Switzerland)

expanded on myopathies of equine athletes, their pathogenesis and therapy.

Day 3: pathology and physiology of lameness; diagnostic tools

Papers on the pathology of lameness correlated with the uro-genital system were presented by Dr Langlois (Chantilly, France) on the final day of the Congress.

Professor Denoix described the physiological and pathological factors found in the lumbar, sacral and sacro-iliac regions and Professor Straub elucidated the skin conditions of the trunk.

Dr Meier (University of Bern, Equine Hospital) presented a paper on the statistical evaluation of horses referred for proximal limb lameness. For this institute, scintigraphy and radiology constitute the most effective diagnostic procedures for the examination of proximally seated lameness.

Professor Verschooten (Gent, Belgium) attempted to evaluate critically the value of osteopathy in locomotive problems of the horse. Lively discussion ensued. It was

concluded that collaboration and critical scientific work could only lead to the distinction between myth and reality.

The Congress was concluded with short papers and a panel discussion on medical control in International Equestrian Federation (FEI) governed disciplines. The need for clear and comprehensive rules and regulations was highlighted and the moral and ethical positions condemning doping appeared to be unanimous. However, attitudes differed in the practical approaches to control of medication abuse. This was said to be hampered by the lack of guidelines on the clearance times for drugs from the equine athlete.

Proceedings of this meeting are available from Swiss Vet, Verlag, Dr Felix Wuest AG, Postfach, CH-8700 Kuesnacht, ZH Switzerland (70 Swiss francs). They have been published as a supplement to the Swiss Review for Veterinary Medicine, which is Swiss Vet Number 8 (1991), No 11a. The articles are published in the language in which they were presented.

CLINICAL QUIZ

ANSWER

The clinical and clinico-pathological features indicate multi-organ infections, including enteritis/colitis (involving cryptosporidial infection), pneumonia, dermatitis (involving dermatophilosis) and possible renal failure. There is an absolute lymphopaenia, and this, coupled with the clinical findings and breed of the foal, indicates a possible diagnosis of combined immunodeficiency syndrome (CID). There are three criteria that must be satisfied to confirm a diagnosis of CID: an absence of serum IgM, an absolute lymphopaenia

(less than 1.0×10^9 /litre), and evidence of diffuse hypoplasia of lymphoid tissues examined post mortem.

CID is a primary immune deficiency disease characterised by an absence of both B- and T-lymphocytes. Affected foals are highly susceptible to viral (such as Adenovirus and Coronavirus), bacterial (pneumonia, enteritis/colitis, dermatitis, meningitis, etc) and protozoal (such as *Cryptosporidia* and *Pneumocystis carinii*) infections. The disorder is inherited as an autosomal recessive trait in the Arabian breed. Affected foals usually show clinical signs of infectious disease a few weeks after birth, when the colostral antibodies have been catabolised.