



THAL EQUINE, LLC

Quality Veterinary Services Exclusively for Horses

SPRING 2006

Dear Clients and Friends,

February 18, 2006 marks 9 years since the opening of "Sangre de Cristo Equine Services" and the beginning of our equine veterinary practice in northern New Mexico.

We have been through some pretty amazing changes. The only thing that has stayed the same is our commitment to provide clients and horses in northern New Mexico with great veterinary medicine and service. The changes taking place in our practice will make that mission more possible.

My original idea 10 years ago had been to form an equine hospital in Santa Fe as I felt that it was the closest horse population to my family home near Mora. It has been a long road, but after all, we are now building our practice in Santa Fe!

It turns out that it's very difficult to start an equine practice in Santa Fe. Real estate prices, water and intense county regulations are just a few of the major hurdles. We have been working on it for several years. Now it seems that all the hard work has been worth it. We have found the right location for what we want to do!

All of this change has meant that we have had some staff turnover. The great news is that through it all, we have been trimmed down to a small team of talented people, dedicated to delivering great equine veterinary service. Our team is committed to our move, and several will relocate to Santa Fe as the practice grows.

Our plan is to move the capabilities that we have in Taos to Santa Fe over the coming months. We plan to keep our Taos facility operational, but gradually increase the surgical and diagnostic capabilities at our new Santa Fe location. All the while we will maintain great service to our established clients in Taos and Las Vegas.

I want to take the time to thank you for your support over the years. It has enabled us to get to this point, and this exciting opportunity before us now

I hope to see you and your horses at our new facility this year! Give us a call and arrange to stop by for a visit! We think you'll be pleased.

Sincerely,

Doug Thal DVM and
Staff of Thal Equine, LLC



New Santa Fe location, view of indoor and one of the outdoor arenas

Thal Equine, LLC Update

DR. BESSIE BABITS IS PRACTICING FULL TIME IN TAOS
Taos area clients call 505-737-5322 for emergencies and appointments, as always.

Many of you have had the opportunity to meet Dr. Bessie Babits. She is an excellent veterinarian, accomplished horsewoman and a great person. Many clients have enjoyed her warm and thorough approach to practice.

Dr. Babits will continue to provide the same veterinary services in Taos. We will provide uninterrupted service to our clients in the Taos area and plan to continue to do that in the future. Most of our staff is still in Taos. Cindy Medina and Ruth Bourgeois are integral employees who have been with us for years. Maggie Minter and Amy Mandeville continue to help support the practice there as well.

- **We will insure that our loyal Taos area and southern Colorado clients are still provided excellent routine and emergency care for their horses.**
- **We plan to maintain the Taos equine practice long term, but envision most of the specialty services to be provided in Santa Fe.**
- Dr. Thal will continue to provide service to Taos clients as possible.
- We will perform selected surgical and diagnostic procedures in Taos until the time when those procedures can be performed in Santa Fe.



DR. THAL NOW LIVES AND PRACTICES IN SANTA FE
Santa Fe 24-hour emergency service and appointment scheduling is through our regular clinic telephone numbers: 505-737-5322 or toll free 888-737-5322.

For the past 10 months, we have been renting part of the Gan Eden Ranch, 6.5 miles from I-25 off of South Highway 14. This property has historically been a boarding and training stable, and we have set up a basic veterinary facility there. We are now set to buy the property and we are living on it until closing in early April.

- My wife and I live at this facility.

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Entrance to boarding barn, Santa Fe

DRY WEATHER CONCERNS

By Dr. Doug Thal

I have lived in this area since I was a small child and I do not remember a time when I was more worried about the weather conditions. Based on the latest that I have read, as of March 2, 2006, this is the driest winter since 1904! The extremely dry weather will pose many problems for horses and their owners. It is best to go into this warm and dry season prepared. Here is a list of things to think about:

- Drought conditions put real stress on horses. Grazing horses on pasture are generally happy, healthy horses. Any grazing that we might have normally will likely be severely reduced by the severe drought conditions. When pastures are grazed to the ground, horses ingest more dirt and sand as they graze short stubble. Owners with their horses on pastures with sand—**BEWARE**. These conditions will favor the ingestion of sand and problems associated with that, including colic.
- In general, horses under stress have a higher incidence of colic and other health problems.
- Blowing wind and dust causes eye and respiratory problems. Fly masks may be helpful for eyes irritated by insects. Provide adequate shelter and clean feed and bedding to reduce dust problems.
- Certain diseases such as Pigeon Breast (Dryland Distemper) and Vesicular Stomatitis are more prevalent in dry, hot and dusty conditions. Know the clinical signs and be on the lookout for these diseases. Call if you have any questions.
- A decreased hay supply will mean that many owners will have to resort to purchasing hay where they can get it. This means diet change, which can lead to problems like colic and laminitis. Watch for hay containing weeds and sharp seed heads. Be careful of changing hays or other feeds drastically.
- It will be important to insure access to free choice, clean water. Horses drinking from ditches, small streams and ponds can get into trouble as these water sources can become stagnant breeding grounds for bacteria and other microbes that can cause severe illness.
- Fire preparedness—horse owners who live in fire prone areas should be sure that they have an evacuation plan. Ideally, all horse owners should have (or have easy access to) a serviceable truck and trailer that they can use quickly in an emergency. All horses should be easily caught and should load and tie without difficulty. If these basics are a problem, now is the time to resolve it either yourself or with help.

Update, continued from Page 1

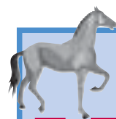
- The location is excellent – only minutes and a straight shot from I-25 and Santa Fe. It is an easy drive from the Albuquerque east mountain area also.
 - We plan to build a full service equine veterinary and referral hospital here as soon as possible. At that time, we will begin offering a wide range of specialty services.
 - The facility currently includes an indoor arena, several outdoor arenas, and stables. The existing facility will be the foundation for a separate boarding and training business on the property
- For now, with my wife and I and staff living on site, we will be set up to:
- House and care for selected intensive care medical cases
 - Provide attended foaling for at-risk mares.
 - House mares for artificial insemination breeding with shipped semen.
 - Provide detailed lameness and pre-purchase exams.
 - Provide a controlled environment for better exams and procedures.
 - Provide an excellent environment for corrective dentistry services.
 - Provide well-equipped mobile service and emergency service to the Santa Fe area.

LAS VEGAS AREA CLIENTS - GOOD NEWS!

OUR NEW LOCATION IS JUST AN HOUR FROM LAS VEGAS. THE FACILITY IS JUST MINUTES FROM I-25 IN SANTA FE, WITH EXCELLENT ACCESS.

As always, CALL 505-737-5322 or 888-737-5322 for emergencies and appointments.

- We will continue to provide support, mobile and emergency service whenever possible for our clients in the Las Vegas area.
- Our Las Vegas 9 Mile Hill property is for sale. Until it sells, I will continue to use it as a place to meet clients and their horses. Later, I plan to set up another meeting place near there (at an existing horse facility) such that I can examine horses in a controlled and efficient way.
- We maintain a pharmacy and supply store in the area for emergencies and commonly used items.



www.thalequine.com

Have questions about your horse's care? If you are looking for information on horse health issues, check out the Articles page at thalequine.com. Here you will find articles on all aspects of horse care, including articles written by Dr. Thal that have been published in *Today's Horse Trader*. Articles include an in-depth look at colic, laminitis, dentistry, back problems, gastric ulcers, wounds, and more.

Client handouts such as *Giving Oral Medications*, *Internal Parasites*, *IM Injections* and a synopsis of each of last year's colic and lameness seminars can also be found on the Articles page.

Over 20 different brochures on horse health care topics from the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) can be downloaded as PDF files.

If you would like a printed copy of any of these articles or brochures, just email or call the office and we will be happy to send these to you.

The doctors of Thal Equine want you, the horse owner, to be as well-informed as possible about your horse's health care options. We will continue to regularly update the Web site with new articles and information. Please feel free to contact us if you have questions about something you read or see on the Web site.

Helping You Help Your Horse!



LEARNING TO LISTEN

By Dr. Bessie Babits

A new year is an opportune time to further develop the partnership that you have with your horse. Whether you train for competitions, pleasure riding, or enjoy starting young horses, it is equally important to really understand and communicate with the horse. Much of the time, resistance and bad experiences in the training process can be avoided if you learn to listen to your horse.

Whether you know it or not, there is a constant dialogue between you and your horse as you are together in the “Horse-Human Herd.” The horse’s actions and your responses to those actions are the foundation of this dialog.

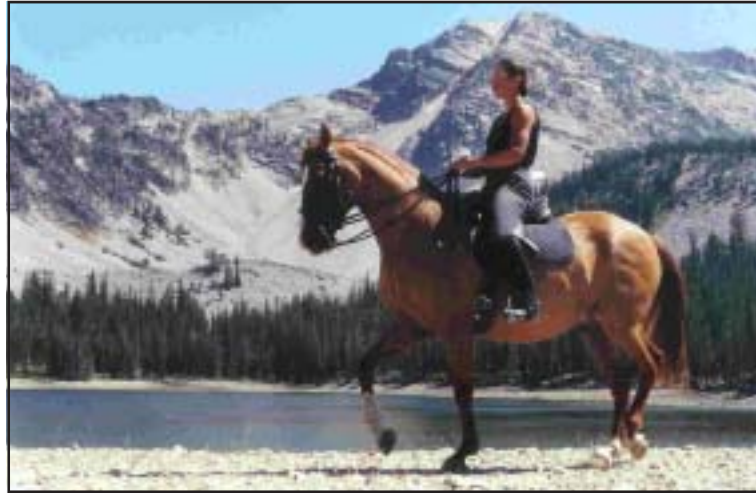
Each time you work with your horse you have a golden opportunity to be his student, to learn to understand and know him. In working on your relationship with your horse, you will also realize much about yourself. The horse is an excellent mirror. Now is a great time to embark on this new journey of understanding our relationship with our horses. This journey will not only help us to understand the mind of the horse, but will also help us separate responses caused by physical pain from behavioral problems.

Most people, myself included, are reflexive reactors. We react to things that our horses do, then think about to what we have reacted. Horses are reactors as well and the combination can be what leads to dangerous situations. Because we have imposed our lives onto the horse, I feel it is only fair that we aspire to understand his thinking process. This can only be accomplished if we become thinkers, not reactors.

To become a thinking rider/trainer is to open your mind to the horse: look, listen, learn from him, and look very hard at ourselves. To do this, you must first carefully watch the horse to see how he responds to you, his environment, and other horses. The signs he gives you may be subtle such as a look in the eye or slight tension in the body (body language is how horses communicate) or as blatant as bucking or bolting.

Learning from the horse means putting together what you have observed and “heard” from the horse. Learn to ask yourself why the horse has acted—be it positively or negatively—in a particular manner.

The thinking rider is an analyst. He or she compiles the information received from the horse, realizes why the horse has reacted



Dr. Bessie Babits riding her horse, Dusty, near her hometown in Idaho.

in such a way, and then acts (not reacts) on that information in a way the horse can understand.

You might ask yourself, “Why should I go to all this trouble when working with my horse?” The answer is simple. If you learn to understand the horse, you can develop a true connection with him that you cannot develop any other way. At its peak, you can merely think what you want from your horse and he complies!

Understanding your horse also enables you to determine if something physical is wrong with him. Resistance is common in everyday training and is often a defence mechanism the horse develops. Horses usually resist in an attempt to protect themselves from what they perceive as danger or unpleasantness.

Physical pain often comes in the form of mild to obvious lameness that makes the horse move in a compensatory manner. This subtle lameness can be hard for an owner to see. Even mild, subtle lameness causes a decrease in performance and willingness to work. Lameness kept in work often become more lame and resentful of work. Secondary problems develop, such as back soreness and other lameness. Severe behavioral changes may then result as a horse tries to resist chronic discomfort.

If your horse is resisting flying lead changes, is not sliding as well in his stop, refuses to engage as well, is swishing his tail, pinning his ears, not accepting the bit, etc., then chances are very good that he is experiencing pain. He may be providing you with very clear communication to that effect. There is no point in forcing the horse to work or perform if he is painful or he will learn to resent the work and will lose his brilliance.

Stop and examine whether pain might be at the heart of the problem.

For example, if I ask my horse to do a flying lead change and he consistently only changes in the front, then I must ask myself the following questions: Was it my riding position or aids that caused the problem? Does my tack fit? Was my timing correct? Is the horse painful?

Pain in hocks or stifles is common and can result in secondary back pain. This will make a horse unwilling and unable to change leads correctly. Even something as subtle as not being as willing to go forward with impulsion or failure to engage the hindquarters properly can be an early signal that a lameness is brewing.

The key to working *with* your horse is to always have a *willing* horse. You should always give the horse the benefit of the doubt. A poor performance should never be grounds for punishment or force. Think of it instead as a possible signal of an underlying physical problem, *or a problem with your own technique*. After all, you would resist going out and running if your feet, knees, or back hurt, right? Resistance in training can indeed be behavioral, but I find that much of it stems from underlying pain.

If you want to find the true mind of the horse, the absolute oneness between you and your horse, remember to *look, listen, and learn*, and to look at yourself. You will find that as you begin to think and act this way you will be embarking on a new life-journey.

I have a particular interest in lameness, and behavioral and training issues as they relate to performance horses.

For lameness, performance, and behavior problem evaluations, contact Thal Equine, LLC at 505-737-5322.

THIS YEAR'S SPRING SPECIALS

It is time for spring health care, vaccinations and de-worming. This year we will provide our Spring Specials as we always do. We recommend that every horse in our practice receive Encephalitis/tetanus, and West Nile vaccination at a minimum. For horses that travel or are in contact with others, we recommend vaccination for influenza and rhinopneumonitis.

On an as-needed basis, we recommend rabies, strangles or other vaccinations. For more detail on recommended vaccinations, see our website.

Included deworming will be Ivermectin liquid. For a small added fee, we will include either Qwest + or Equimax, each of which contain tapeworm medication.

The Thal Equine Spring Special includes:

- Brief veterinary exam and consult, per horse
- Dental exam
- Recommended vaccination tailored to the needs of the horse and owner. There are differences among vaccines. Let us help you by providing the best ones!

- Recommended parasite control tailored to the needs of the horse and owner. Again, let us help you make the right choice.

- A chance for you to ask questions and learn about the health of your horse. We feel strongly that there is value in informed preventative care for horses. Proper preventative care will keep your horse healthier, happier, performing better and living longer!

Let us help you catch health problems early, before they worsen and are more difficult to treat. This will save you money in the long run.

PreventiCare

Clients whose horses are on the PreventiCare will need to schedule their spring work which is included in your enrollment fee. This program is basically colic surgical insurance packaged with a program of routine preventative health care for your horse.

For more on how PreventiCare works, please see our Web site, www.thalequine.com.

**SPRING/SUMMER
CLINIC HOURS**
BEGINNING APRIL 3:
Monday - Friday 8-5
Saturday 8 - 12
PHONE: 505-737-5322
Outside of Taos: 888-737-5322
www.thalequine.com
info@thalequine.com
**24-HOUR
EMERGENCY SERVICE**

Horse Owner's Workshops

On Wednesday, May 10, please join Dr. Thal, Dr. Babits of Thal Equine and Troy Rogers, Purina representative, for a Horse

Owner's Workshop® at Gan Eden, the site of Thal Equine's Santa Fe location. There will be an open house starting at 5:30 p.m., followed by nutrition presentation and vet talks at 6:30.



On Thursday, May 11, 6:30 p.m. a Horse Owners Workshop will be held in Espanola (location TBA). Dr. Babits will give an informative talk on how lameness effects performance.

Both events will feature refreshments, great door prizes, including halters, horse feed and more. See our Web site for more information on these events.

2006 SPRING SPECIALS

Service	1 horse	5 to 9 horses	10 or more
Spring Special #1: EWT, West Nile, deworming, brief exam, dental exam. No flu/rhino.	\$60	\$57 each	\$55 each
Spring Special #2: EWT, flu/rhino, West Nile, deworming, brief exam, dental exam.	\$80	\$77 each	\$75 each
Spring Special #3: EWT, IM rhino and intranasal flu, West Nile, deworming, brief exam, dental exam.	\$86	\$83 each	\$80 each

Deworming options: Ivermectin liquid included in specials. If you choose Equimax paste or Quest Plus for tapeworms, add \$8.00 to these prices.

THAL EQUINE, LLC



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