



# FEED FOR THOUGHT

## THIS TIME OF YEAR IS GENERALLY KNOWN AS “COLIC SEASON,” DO YOU KNOW WHY?

While changes in management can also contribute to the higher incidence of colic as the weather gets colder, such as less time riding or less plentiful grass in pasture, there has long been known to a link between colic & cold weather changes. A possible reason for this is the dropping barometric pressure associated with most cold fronts. The more rapid & severe the drop, the more likely that the horse will experience gastrointestinal upset.

A similar effect is seen in us people when we travel to higher altitudes. While going for a nice outdoors trip in the mountains, it is very common to experience bloating or flatulence.

Why does this happen? While the pressure outside drops, the pressure of gases within the gastrointestinal tract remains the same. This creates an imbalance between external (atmospheric) and internal (gastrointestinal tract) pressures which must be allowed time to equalize. Before this can occur though, the gastrointestinal tract will expand with gas beyond its normal limits & the horse will experience a great amount of internal pressure which can trigger spasms of the intestinal tract & be quite painful. This is known as “spasmodic colic” or gas colic. Often times this type of colic

will remedy itself with minimal intervention beyond monitoring & observation. However, since different types of colic can present themselves in almost identical fashion, it is important to observe every colic til resolution & not assume that your horse’s colic is simply due to the season.

Some ways to try to prevent seasonal colic is to encourage continuous gut motility to help relieve the pressure within the gastrointestinal tract as efficiently as possible. This can be done by encouraging water consumption, keeping forage consistent, & adding a pro- & prebiotic to the horse’s diet (we recommend Cavalor Vitaflor 365). An easy way to increase water consumption would be to add lukewarm water to your horse’s grain ration in about a 1:1 ratio.

Once you are certain that your horse is on the upswing about a small bout of colic, giving them a small serving of Cavalor Mash & Mix with water can help them get back to his or her normal self. The combination of vegetables, herbs, electrolytes, and gently processed grains helps stimulate digestion & encourage hydration.