

What Do You Know?

Horse knowledge is sort of like manure...over the years, you seem to pick up a lot of it! Can you answer these random queries on equine behavior, sports, breeds, and terms?

1. One horse lies down, rolls over twice, gets up, and shakes himself all over. Another horse lies down, rolls over twice, gets up, and stands still. Which horse is more likely to be sick?
2. Your Morgan horse is moving his feet in the following pattern: left hind, left fore, right hind, right fore. What gait is he performing?
3. My mare stands with her weight on three legs; one hind leg is cocked with no weight on it. Your gelding stands with his weight on three legs; one foreleg is cocked with no weight on it. Which horse is more likely to be lame?
4. Standardbred harness horses race at either a trot or a pace. Which gait is faster?
5. Four horses are turned out together. On a warm spring afternoon, what is the maximum number of horses likely to be lying down at the same time?
6. You're considering buying one of two horses. As you ride the first one, you notice he makes an odd whistling sound when he inhales. The other one seems to make a strange fluttery noise when he exhales. Would you suspect a respiratory problem with both, just one, or neither horse?
7. Your horse is moving his feet in the following pattern: left hind foot, right hind and left fore together, then right fore. What gait is he performing?
8. After you have fed your horse, you see him repeatedly stretching out his neck and yawning. This action may be a sign of what problem?
9. In what way can a gelding be described as a maiden?
10. What's the difference in stronglyes and strangles?
11. In which direction can the horse in question 7 most easily turn or circle?
12. In what equestrian discipline might you encounter a trap, a drag, and a body break?
13. What equestrian sport, named for the Tibetan word for "ball," can trace its origins to around 600 B.C.?
14. In what equestrian discipline might a spectator see a real live unicorn?
15. Janus, Old Billy, Steeldust, and Three Bars were important sires in the development of what popular breed?
16. Why are there no two-time winners of the Kentucky Derby?
17. Can you explain the difference in a gig, a gag, and a gogue?
18. Which of these feed ingredients—corn, barley, oats, soybeans, wheat—has the highest level of protein?
19. Your neighbor, who is from an old Scottish family, offers to sell you a yeld mare. What is he talking about?
20. One horse stands with both forefeet directly under its shoulders. Another prefers to stand with one forefoot under the shoulder and the other forefoot about six inches ahead. A third horse stands with both forefeet stretched out in front of its body. What does each posture tell you?

Now for the answers:

1. It's normal for a horse to shake himself after rolling. A horse that rolls and doesn't shake itself afterwards may be in an early stage of colic, and bears some watching.
2. This pattern of footfalls is found in the walk.

3. While it's very common for healthy horses to rest a hind leg, an idle horse almost never takes weight off a foreleg unless there is pain or lameness somewhere in the hoof or leg.
4. Pacers are slightly faster than trotters (a difference of about four seconds over a mile).
5. In this group of four horses, probably only three will lie down at the same time. Usually one horse in any herd remains standing, lying down only when another horse gets up to take over sentinel duty.
6. Noise heard when a horse exhales is usually caused by a flutter of the membrane at the edge of the nostril and is not considered a problem. Noise on inhalation may mean partial paralysis of the laryngeal membranes, a condition that often obstructs free breathing.
7. This pattern of footfalls is found at the canter or lope.
8. Horses that seem to yawn frequently after feeding may be trying to dislodge grain that is stuck on or between their teeth. These horses may need a dental checkup.
9. A maiden is any horse that has not won a race or horse show class. The term is applied to both male and female horses.
10. Strongyles are harmful equine parasites; strangles is a highly contagious bacterial disease.
11. This horse is on the right lead, and can circle most easily to the right. The "lead" leg is the foreleg that hits the ground in the final beat of this three-beat gait.
12. While these terms might also be construed to have various fox-hunting meanings, they refer here to vehicles that can be drawn by one or more horses.
13. Polo.
14. A "unicorn" is the term used to describe a hitch where two horses are harnessed side by side immediately in front of the carriage, with a single horse harnessed in front of the pair.
15. These horses were important Quarter Horse sires, several of which contributed Thoroughbred genes to the breed.
16. Only three-year-old horses are eligible to run in the Kentucky Derby; therefore no horse can enter this race more than once.
17. A gig is a light two-wheeled cart drawn by a single horse. A gag is a type of snaffle bit in which the reins pass through rings at the sides of the bit, allowing it to be drawn higher in the horse's mouth as the reins are shortened. A gogue (or De Gogue) is a training device that limits the horse's ability to raise his head and extend his neck.
18. Whole soybeans have a protein level of about 40 % followed by wheat, whole oats, barley, and corn, all of which are within the range of 8-15%. The protein content of many grains varies by type, stage of maturity, and quality.
19. A yeld mare is an archaic term for a barren mare, or one that is not in foal.
20. The first horse shows normal posture. The second horse may be indicating pain in the foot or leg by "pointing" the painful limb. The third horse exhibits classic posture for laminitis (founder), with severe pain in both forefeet.