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Photo Credit Totem Photographics

Well, besides being glad you picked up our last edition of ABSJ print, I am a little sad to say this is the end of my short notes to you all in this format.



It's been a really great 4 years producing this magazine, and I really hope you all will continue your readership through our social media platforms and our website. Our information will be even more 'up to the minute' than ever before without the hindrance of waiting for the next print to come out.

We have new pages on the website including a continually updated results page, questionnaires, new articles of all varieties as well as the monthly newsletters.

I look forward to our next journey with you!

Holly Grayton - Publisher

Contributing Writers: Holly Grayton | Lynne Burns | Sandra Sokoloski | Amanda Kroeker | Alexander Grayton | Tina Watkins | Danny Kroetch | Editors - Alexander Grayton, Lynne Burns and Patricia Smith-Grayton

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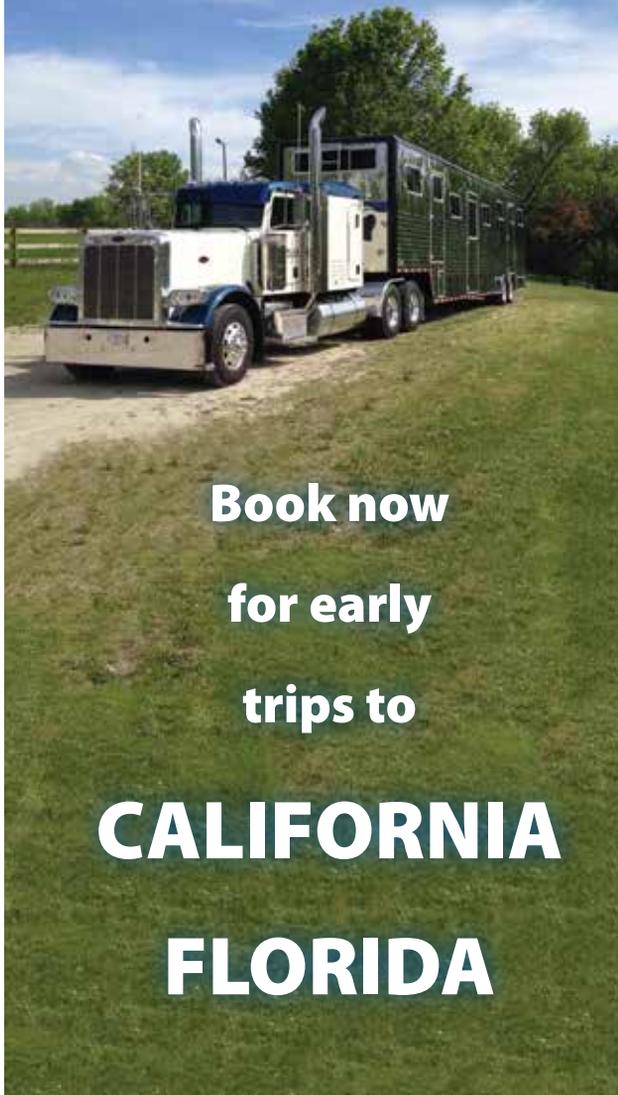


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Show Schedule

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November 3-12 The Royal Winter Fair

November 18-19 Jump Alberta Symposium

November 18-19 Paul Belasik Clinic

November 18-19 Gary Striker Clinic

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Albertans on the FEI Ranking List

Alberta Ranking	Canada Ranking	World Ranking	Rider
1	5	158	Christopher Surbey
2	7	173	Vanessa Mannix
3	12	363	Jaelyn Duff
4	13	386	Jenn Serek
5	16	425	Kara Chad
6	19	473	Ben Asselin
7	23	588	Kyle Timm
8	24	602	Tamie Phillips
9	28	700	Elizabeth Gingras
10	31	772	Lisa Carlsen
T-11	T-38	1078	Samara Heinrichs
T-11	T-38	1078	John Anderson
13	46	1178	Rachel Cornacchia
14	48	1346	Jenna Thompson
15	53	1391	Jim Ifko



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Is it me or my tack?

Sandra Sokoloski

Many riders come to see me because they are crooked and have sore hips or back. Asking them about their saddle and stirrups is part of my assessment. My number 1 question is when was the saddle last re-flocked? Many riders that consult with me have physical problems that lend themselves to sitting to



Rider sitting with saddle tipped left causing right side tension and 'jamming' of left leg

one side. I ask them to check the panels to see if one side has been even a tiny bit squashed in the front or the back. If the panels of the saddle are at all uneven (due to their history of crookedness) the rider will end up sitting to one side no matter how hard they try to be straight. This leads to collapsing at the waist or leaning to the opposite side and creating excessive

compression on the joints of the lower spine. Gripping with the thigh on the opposite side may also occur which can lead to knee pinching, overactive hip flexors or inner thigh strain. Gripping with the hip muscles on the same side often causes muscle ache and cramping.

I also ask about stirrups. Many riders started using

the flexible stirrups thinking it would help with their leg/foot position. Nothing is further from the truth. Unless they have a structural abnormality in their leg or ankle, jumper riders that use the flexible stirrups will struggle more with their balance. The stirrup and the ball of the foot must act as a solid base so the calf can be an adaptable spring mechanism. Riders using these stirrups often lean to far up the neck at take off and/or fall back to soon/hard on landing. Their lower leg may swing more or they will brace it forward to compensate.

If you struggle with being crooked or stiff, have your movement assessed by someone that understands riding as well as tack variances and can offer suggestions that address the whole picture! 

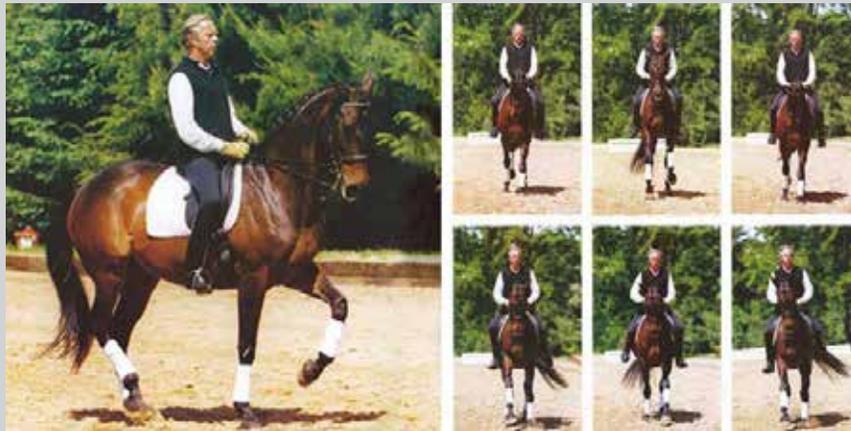


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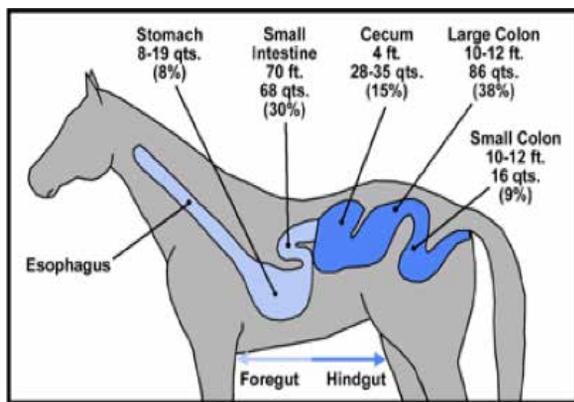
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Hindgut Microbiome & Fermentrics

- Part 1

Amanda Kroeker, BSc, MSc, PAg Equine Nutritionist



Terminology such as “hindgut microbes” or “hindgut fermentation” have become the buzz words in equine nutrition. Scientists and Nutritionists were quick to recognize that when the hindgut is kept stable this equates to a healthier and more efficient horse.

Research efforts are focusing around understanding the function of the hindgut microbes in addition to how best to feed those microbes. One of many challenges with this research has been the extremely dynamic environment of the microbiome.

Microbial populations rapidly modify their form and function depending on nutritional components, physical attributes and environmental factors. In this article and in a series of articles to follow, we will discuss what is the microbiome, what is Fermentrics, how are we nutritionally classifying horses according to their microbiome and what does that mean for feeding our horses.

Essentially, we are feeding microbes, which become the nutritional foundation for the horse.

Have you ever wondered why it is that some commercial complete feeds or supplements will work for a group of horses, but there are typically one or two horses that just do not thrive on the feed or supplement? Often horse owners will say to me, “My horse is unique and feeding him is a challenge.” In fact, horses have their own individualized microbiome.

Several studies have determined that every horse has their own unique microbiome and regardless of how much we try to manipulate it, we cannot change that microbiome. In fact, when Scientists evacuated the hindgut contents of a test horse and introduced the microbes from a donor horse they discovered that within a matter of weeks the test horse’s microbiome had re-established and there was no evidence of the donor’s microbes.

This significant discovery has led to the research community isolating populations within the microbiome and developing what is called Fermentrics, or the nutritional classification of the horse’s microbiome. Next time we will discuss what populations are in the microbiome and how we are nutritionally classifying horses. 

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Food For Thought: today's rider

Holly Grayton

Over the past few months some of America's most legendary horsemen have stirred the pot and encouraged the show jumping community to think about the future – and the past that brought us to this point.

Notably most recently some long standing

professionals in have expressed concern about the lack of depth coming up through the ranks – not the depth of numbers or depth of money but depth of old school values. Horsemanship.

Morris, Prudent and others have extolled the virtues of the good old days, and have been vocal that today's rider is nothing like those from years past. Today's rider doesn't know their horse, how to care for it, nor any of the stable management skills that used to be imperative to learn in order to ride.

I come from a modest background, and I love to care for my own horses, but I believe riders grooming for themselves need to be considered from a different perspective.

Times are changing, as they are wont to do. I'm not copping to those riders that stand on the mounting block and await their steed, but I will argue this: riders are competing on more horses now than they ever have; shows run the full length of the calendar; having one horse per division just isn't the norm at A circuit shows anymore.



Professionals have always been given leeway on the topic of grooming for themselves because they are so busy helping all the other riders. So what about these young amateurs? Set aside the fact that for some show circuits they may fly in from their post-secondary school or work late

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Thursday night so they can compete Friday-Sunday, and then a late flight back Sunday night to their other life. The young amateurs nowadays can be just as busy as the pros are while at the show, competing on 2-10 horses in one day. Granted, this is not the entirety of the crowd, but a substantial percentage on this continent.

Not that many years ago most Grand Prix riders had only one horse to compete at that level – maybe two. Consider a typical day for a top level horse: go out for a couple of hand walks or grazing during the day, get lunged, get hacked, have a bath, get braided, do some sort of physio routine, compete, jump off, cool down and do more physio, then get washed, bandaged, just a bit more physio and finally put to bed. This doesn't include the general stall mucking, feeding, tack cleaning, organizing, sweeping and so on that goes on at the barn simultaneously. This is just what the horse gets up to in a day! And really every horse these days is treated like a grand prix horse.

As a rider you have to get dressed, hack your horse, walk your course, go over it with your trainer or ground person, watch a few rounds, warm up, compete, cool down, go over what you did with your trainer, make a plan for any equipment changes for the next day and then get on another one to do the same thing. Even having only two horses at the show is nearly a full-time job. Evidently eating and resting appropriately for the task at hand are helpful to get to sometime as well.

Riding and grooming are both full-time jobs, and should be treated as such.

This is the time when you might exclaim “the grooms work harder than riders do,” and I will never dispute how hard grooms work, period.

The point is that riders ride a minimum of six hours a week just keeping these horses fit for the shows, and countless more hours keeping the horses healthy and happy, planning, organizing, preparing, and so on. So why would we then stretch ourselves so thin energetically and mentally that the rider can't do their absolute best job competing?

One top rider I interviewed once said to me, “My job is to ride, and to ride well. So when the opportunity to show or even just flat another horse or have an extra lesson presents itself, I have to take it!” To be

Continued on page 15



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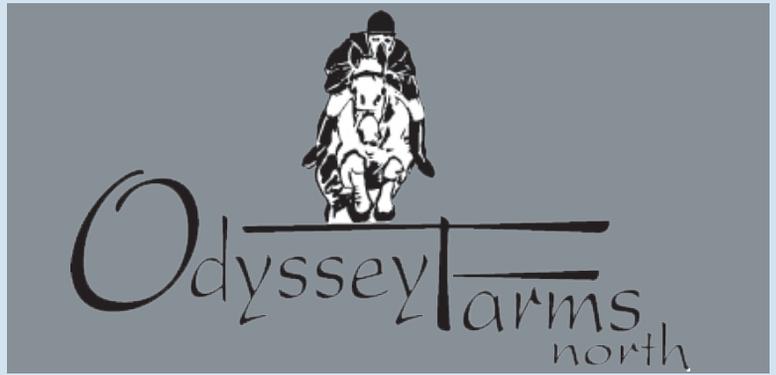
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Justin Prather- congratulations on the purchase of Aimee 2-
winner U25 at Thunderbird!**

Jaclyn Jarrell - We miss you!!

**And of course a huge thank you to our incredible staff! Judy
Howard & Michaela Binda for holding the team together on
the road and Sheena and Reba for holding down the home
front!**

**Donna at Precision Saddle Fitting for the beautiful saddle
made by Adam Ellis for Darrin!**

Tracey and Darrin Dlin



Continued from page 13

the best rider and competitor you have to ride as much as you can. You have to put in the hours of practice. It can hamper your ability to seize these opportunities if you don't have the time to do so with your own responsibilities.

Back in the 'good old days' the show schedule didn't go every week of the year; horses didn't travel across the ocean (or the continent for that matter) several times a year to keep competing. Riders often had months at home between shows to practice and take care of the horses.

Times indeed have changed. For any rider looking to strive for the top of the sport, keeping on the road and competing with a string of horses has become part of the gig. This is no excuse for riders not to know their horses' bodies inside and out, but there is a point where realism must enter the equation. We shouldn't complain about the wholesale loss of horsemanship but rather start to come up with real ways to keep it alive in this new paradigm.

Ok I'll start. Of course all riders should know how to tack, untack, groom, bandage, bathe and generally care for their horses. But how do we inspire our young riders to want to know more?

Guilt has been a proven method of persuasion. We should ask our riders how their horse's legs looked before they got on today, ask them what the horse eats and if they think their horse should have more or less. Charge them with the task of checking in about vet work, annual appointments etc. Have them tell the trainer when they think their horse should be clipped in the winter and make it a discussion. Each of these small challenges are opportunities for the rider to feel the responsibility if they didn't consider this, or empowered if they have been keeping their horse on their mind.

Trainers carry the burden of uneducated and deficient horsepeople. They have taken these tasks on themselves (along with their staff) Two things will be required for this to work:

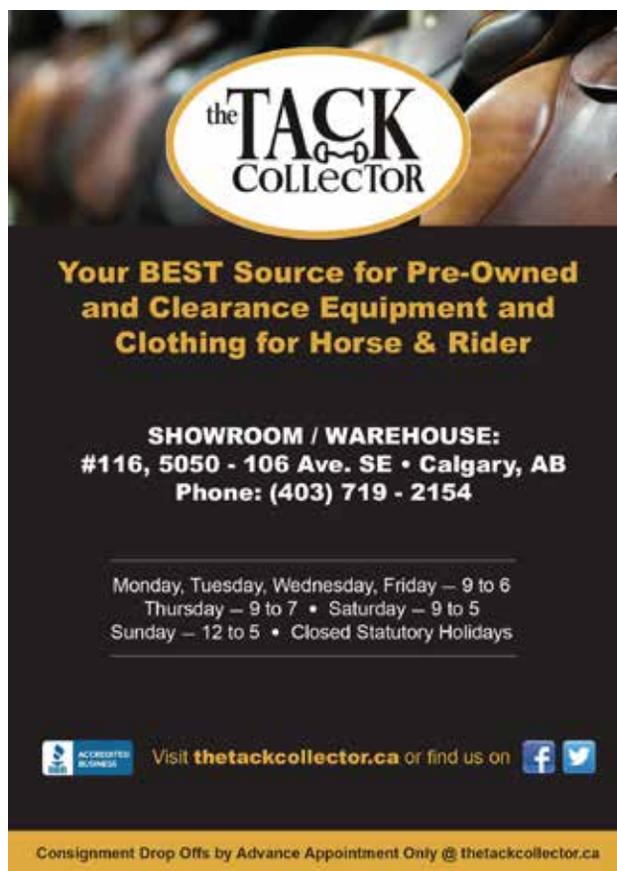
1. The trainer must acknowledge that not all students are good students and that some won't care, either by nature of their personality, dedication or interest in the sport, or laziness (this is not a new theme). The trainers

then have to decide how important those people are to their program.

2. As a trainer are you willing to let people make mistakes? I remember very vividly bandage bowing my mare in my mid teens and the tongue-lashing my coach gave me. But let me tell you I never bandage a horse without thinking of that, and double-checking and re-checking at night check.

Some will quit, that's inevitable. If we can't handle the stress of being told we mismanaged something, they will never dig deep enough to ride a big track with things that scare us and will quit anyway. What I'm saying is that some are dedicated, tough, ready to get down and dirty, but they have more horses now and more extra-curricular commitments as well.

The question I pose is in today's environment is "Will you teach your students the skills, or lament about days gone by?" 



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ABSJ 2018: a Fully Digital Resource

Lynne Burns



In early 2014 Alberta Show Jumpers website was launched, in part, as a market test to gauge interest in the local industry and area expertise. ABSJ felt the remarkable thing about Alberta was the rich knowledge and experience here. You can literally go to a local horse show and find yourself standing beside an Olympian or someone you've seen in the International Ring at Spruce Meadows. We wanted to create a resource to bring that closer to you.

Owing to the interest and area subject matter experts willing to contribute, ABSJ magazine was founded. Fundamental to the launch was the desire to create



a sense of community and provide readers with fantastic articles and opportunities to learn and grow through editorial; our contributors felt that way too.

To that end, in the very first issue ABSJ enjoyed contributions from Bob Henselwood on conformation, Lynne Stephenson on effective riding style, Gail Greenough's Warm Up tricks, Darcy Finlay's advice on perfecting Spruce Meadows' turf, Chris Pack's fun footing facts from Thunderbird; and Jenna Thompson

was the first Albertan Rider we helped you “Get to Know”. ABSJ also began a relationship with regular contributing writers on your physical well-being as a rider and for your horse (Sandra Sokoloski and Tina Watkins).

The magazine would never have reached you without the interest of some long standing ad supporters. We’re pleased to acknowledge these area businesses we feel certain you’ll recognize: The Tack Collector; Moore Equine; Spruce Meadows; Grayton Farms; Trace Embroidery; Jump Alberta; C-Horse Clothing; Ulterra Ranches; Foothills Horse Transport; KVF; and Timberlea Farms. We’re very proud of the collaboration and calibre of partnerships established from the outset.

With that said, a digital format provides a channel for staying well-informed in a more immediate fashion. Although we’ll be sad to stop the traditional print edition, we’re excited to provide a more interactive and live resource for you to use. Starting in 2018, ABSJ will transition completely to digital; our online resource will uphold the same goals and mandates as the print magazine only now exclusively via our website, social media and a monthly newsletter.

What should you look for? Check our home page daily where you can follow the pulse of Alberta’s Show Jumpers, find articles, information and results as well as noteworthy industry news www.albertashowjumpers.com. We’re also on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter! There is a digital print archive so you’ll always have access to the original years of print magazines but the Articles tab will direct you to new editorials and commentaries grouped by topic so you can easily drill down to find out more about something that interests you (e.g., horse health, or video tutorials for example on how to bandage). There’s also a business directory to put you in touch with leaders in various areas of the sport.

ABSJ hopes to offer you everything in a show jumping resource and keep the content aligned with your interests. This is where you come in! We’re curious to know what topics interest you, who you’d like interviewed, and what you’re struggling with so we can help supply the best resource for answers! We hope you interact with us in the New Year in this newly focused arena. 🐾



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ABSJ Medal Final

2017

Alexander Grayton



The ABSJ Medal Series has grown into one of the most popular events for equitation riders and their trainers. The genesis of the series stems from the desire to connect the equitation and medal divisions into the jumper ring and beyond.

Equitation classes have often been an important stepping stone for upcoming and future Grand Prix riders, as well as unique and competitive classes unto their own. The ABSJ Medal has bridged the gap one step closer, combining the style and poise of the equitation division with the effective, decisive and assertive style more often seen in the jumper ring.

Riders compete over a modified Power & Speed style course; in the Power section riders demonstrate their equitation prowess, and in the Speed section they must show a clear

distinction into a more aggressive course plan and execution. The riders are judged on this as well as their position and overall efficacy while riding this course, with marks deducted for any knockdowns along the way.

While the fastest rider may not necessarily win, as can be the case in the jumper ring, the prettiest rider also may not win if they do not demonstrate effective execution of the set course. Thus, the hybrid of the ABSJ Medal!

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At most tournaments that hosted the ABSJ Medal in 2017, it was the most well-attended of all of the equitation classes on average – and impressive feat to be sure, but it simply shows the response from trainers and riders alike who appreciate its value.

The year-end final is held each year at Royal West downtown Calgary, and is one of several featured finals at this event. Since its inception, ABSJ has made a big effort to reward the riders and trainers who support the series with fantastic prizes throughout the year and at the finals in recognition of their achievements.

Calgary area tack store Equi Products has been a generous sponsor of the ABSJ Medal for two years running, and in fact will be taking over the Series as a whole for 2018! ABSJ is excited for this growth, as the ABSJ Medal will surely live on and grow to new heights with Alberta's burgeoning talent!



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My saddle fits...doesn't it?

Tina Watkins EEST EEBW3

The world of saddle fitting is really beginning to change, and this change is happening none too quickly in the opinions of the horses we ride. Saddle fitting has had little research documented until very recently. As professionals in the horse industry, we absolutely know that saddle fitting is an on-going issue. Research is being done at the major universities to determine what truly is best for the horse. The old adage of "I've used this saddle for 30 years, is no longer an acceptable reason to choose a saddle.



There are a few stationary evaluations that can be made at home to help determine the suitability of your saddle, and help promote awareness of the effects of your tack and equipment on your horse. These evaluations must be done with the horse standing square, on a flat surface, with their neck straight in line with the body.

I rarely see a new client's horse without asking to see the saddle that is being regularly used on that horse. This practice of incorporating saddle fitting with every new horse assessment has answered many questions directly related to what I find in the soft tissue of the horse's back. The most interesting part of saddle fitting is that it is now being linked to lameness that people never believed a saddle could cause. Foreleg lameness, suspensory lameness, neck problems, respiratory problems, collection problems, and of course sore backs are all noted as saddle fit related problems. I have a firm belief that there is only one saddle fitting opinion that matters and it is the opinion of your horse.

When fitting a static object to a dynamic surface there are bound to be some complications.

Often times I am called out to see a horse that is 'just not right, not lame, but not right, doesn't bend the same, seems tired, refuses to do things that before seemed so easy for him or her before.' Often the horse has developed behavioral problems that seem out of character.

November/December 2017 Photo Credit Grayt Designs

My Horse's Attitude

Does your horse try to talk to you when you are grooming or tacking him or her up? Does he drop his back, fall to his knees, or look weak in the hind end when the girth is being done up? Does he throw his head into the air? Does he walk away stiff and reluctant to move after the tack is on? All of these are ways your horse is trying to communicate that the tack is uncomfortable and should be further checked.

Saddle 'Square-ness'

A. Off the horse

Continued on page 27



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Why a properly fit saddle?

Danny Kroetch

The short answer to this important question is because a properly fit saddle unequivocally leads to enhanced performance.

First and foremost we must understand that all horses are asymmetrical, just like people. They are left- or right-handed; they have a strong and a weak side. Our saddles must be adjustable to accommodate this and have the ability to be readjusted as our horses develop and change.

Horses are dynamic animals, and their bodies change over time. Feed, work, age, and metabolism can change a horse's shape throughout its life, just like with us humans. Our saddle must allow for these changes and not impede the horse's free movement.

Roughly 95% of all saddles on the market today are made with a wooden or plastic tree – two materials that are known for their relative rigidity. How can it be said that a wooden or plastic tree allows for body changes? These trees restrict movement and can cause daily pain and long-term degeneration of muscles, nerves, and bones. Kissing spine is associated with the use of ill-fitting saddles.

Saddles that are not fit correctly to account for asymmetries will fall to one side. This pinches the withers and traps the scapula causing restriction in the shoulders. Restricting shoulder movement blocks the hind legs, leading to shorter strides, tighter backs, less fluid movement through the whole body, and less jump!

The balance of the saddle from front to back must be correct, regardless of saddle brand. A general rule of thumb is that the pommel should follow an imaginary straight line parallel to the ground across



the saddle and intersect at roughly the middle of the cantle. If the pommel is higher than halfway up the cantle, the tree is too narrow which again causes pinching and restriction of the shoulder. Even worse, the majority of the rider's weight is distributed on the horse's lumbar, which can lead to pain and several other performance defects.

Fit ability is only made possible only through adjustability. In

order to increase your horse's performance, ensure you look after your horse with a correct and pain-free saddle fit. 



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Continued from page 23

Prior to tacking, an evaluation should be made of the soundness of the saddle. Hold the saddle first pommel down, and then cantle down, to check the symmetry of the panels. Secondly, check the flocking is the same from side to side. Run your hands down the flocking and look for any holes or deviations that would cause a pressure point on your horse's back.

Balance Point

The saddle must sit balanced so that the place where your seat bones rest in the saddle is level with the ground. The balance on the horse's back is important because it will dictate the rider's hip angle, and it will also affect the rider's weight distribution onto the horse's back tissue.

Rock

Lateral or longitudinal rock will create friction and pressure points in your horse's back. To check for rock, set your saddle on with no pad on the spot on your horse's back where you would normally ride. Press on the pommel and cantle and determine if when one is pressed down, the other bumps up. Next, gently pull from side to side to determine if the saddle is willing to roll very easily side-to-side. The saddle should not move, rather it should rest securely with minimal rock.

Gullet Width and Height

The gullet is the channel that runs down the middle of the saddle between the two panels. The gullet must span the horse's spine the whole way down the saddle. In many older saddles the gullet gets very narrow toward the back of the saddle.

Tree and Twist Size

Place the saddle on its sweet spot on the horse and evaluate how the tree points fit in the horse's wither pocket. Your horse's wither pocket is the soft tissue under the wither and behind the scapula. Take your flat hand and run it under the saddle from the pommel to the front flap. Your hand should pass through easily, not being halted by a pressure point; it should feel snug and even in pressure.

Panel Shape

The last thing you should check is if the saddle's panel shape matches that of the horse's back. This will affect the weight distribution of the panels and potentially create pressure points.

Even with a perfect fitting saddle the rider's postural or weight imbalance can create a deviation in the saddle that will affect your horse's back. Your trainer will be your greatest asset in evaluating your personal posture. 

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Equi Cup Series is Changing Hands

Alexander Grayton



The second year of the Equi Cup Series has just come to a close with this year's final being held at Amberlea Meadows just outside of Edmonton. After last year's inaugural final at Spruce Meadows in Calgary, the Series has stayed true to its mission statement of providing grassroots opportunities for developing riders throughout Alberta looking to make strides towards furthering their competition experience.

The 2017 season saw a vast increase in show management participation, as more than 25 shows made up the Equi Cup calendar! These included indoor and outdoor shows, from Edmonton to Lethbridge, Calgary to Red Deer, and beyond!

As the Series continues to grow and garner support from Alberta trainers, the desire is to see continuing growth for the individual shows as well as increasing knowledge and rider experiences at the events themselves. One of the important mandates of the series is to have consistent hunter and jumper divisions across the succession of shows, so that riders and trainers always know exactly what they are signing up for and what to expect.

Looking ahead to 2018, the Equi Cup Series will bring forward a few exciting changes, highlighted by

the addition of AEF Wild Rose sanctioning to each of the participating shows. This will further promote and ensure the safety and insurance aspect of the Series' shows.

Finally, Equi Cup founder Holly Grayton will transition out of the role as managing director of the series as Matt Strang will be taking the reins of continuing to build the vision that Holly began. Matt brings a strong background in accounting and organization, and will be a valuable asset to the series with Holly's guidance and support.

The 2018 Equi Cup Series gets under way in just a few short months – visit www.equicup.com for all of the latest information to plan your next season! 🏇



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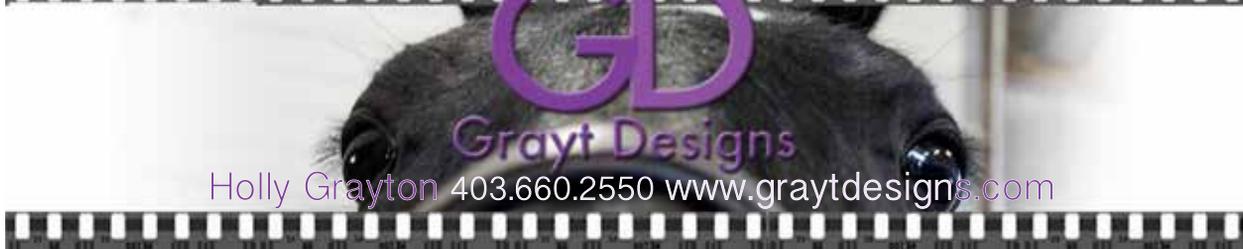
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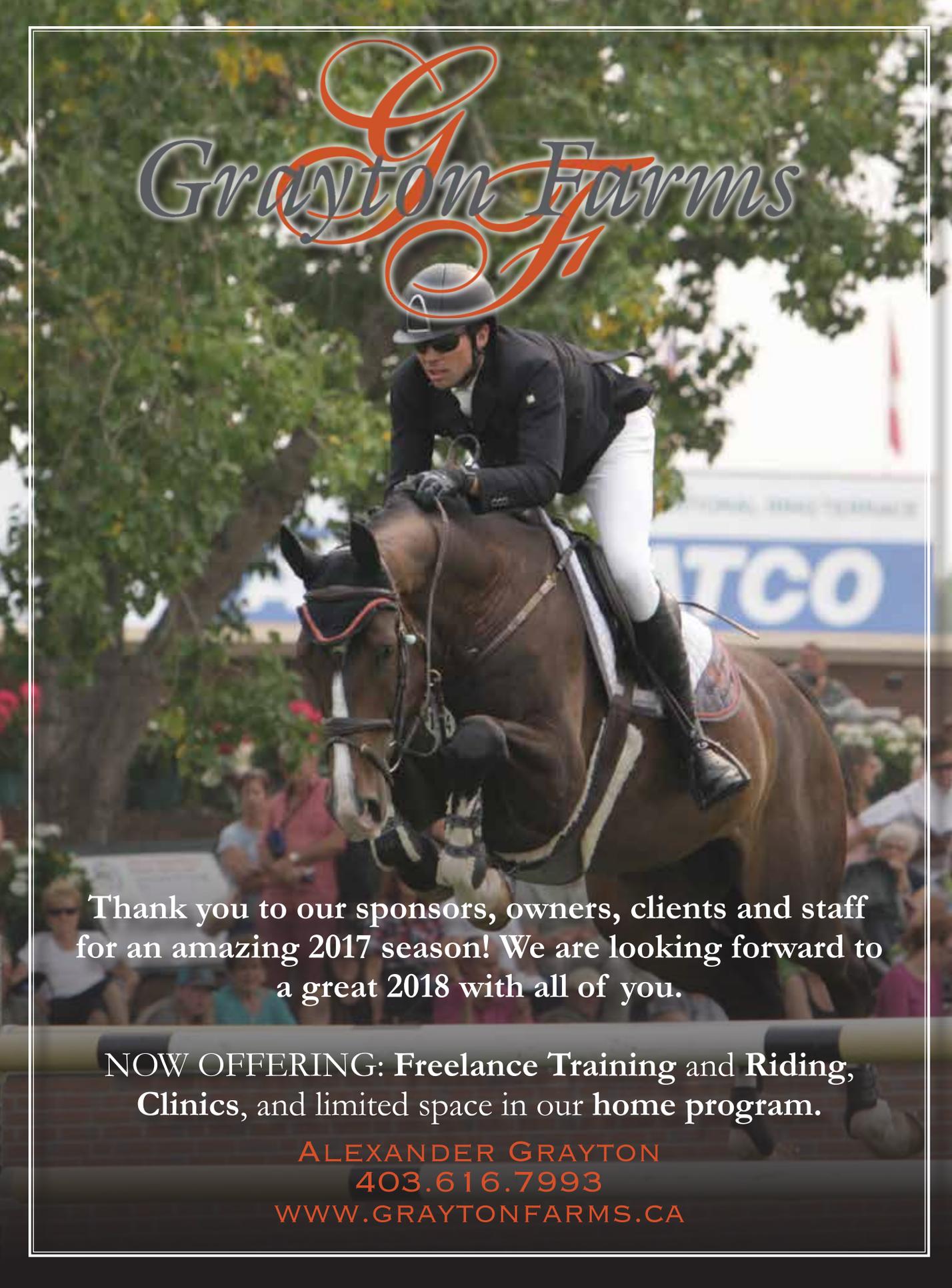
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