EQUINE WELLNESS

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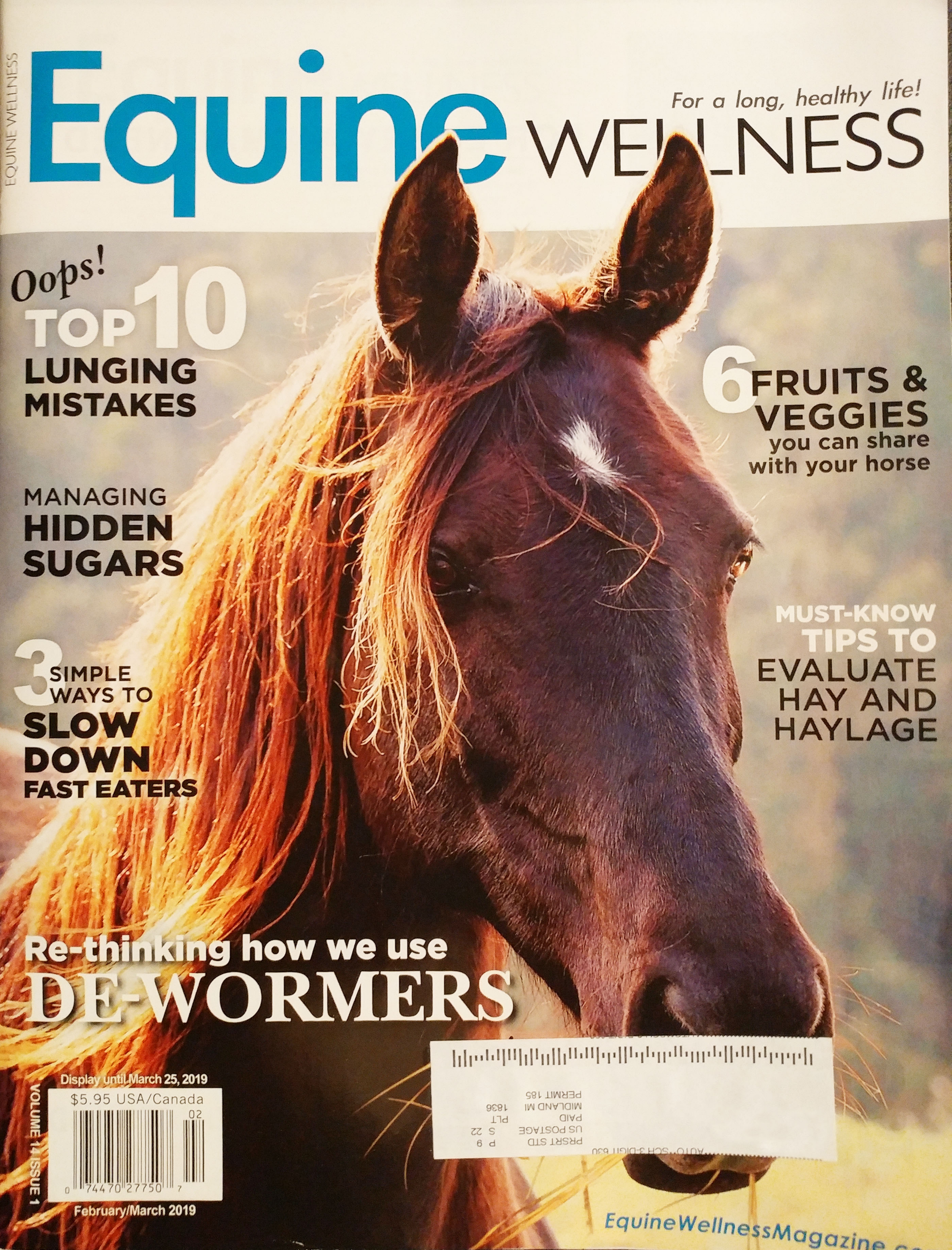

Oops! TOP 10 LUNGING MISTAKES

MANAGING HIDDEN SUGARS

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MUST-KNOW TIPS TO EVALUATE HAY AND HAYLAGE

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Is your broodmare getting the NUTRITION SHE NEEDS?

What the equine body needs and what we think it needs can be two different things. Environmental toxins can interfere with normal tissue function, mineral content, nutrient absorption and the cellular availability of nutrients. So even if you're feeding your broodmare the right things, she may not be getting all the benefits. Fortunately, there's a test that can help.

By Ava Frick, DVM, FAIS

The effects of poor nutrition can be seen in both mares and foals. What's in the mare (or lacking in the mare) will be reflected in her foal. That's why it is important to ensure the mare is in optimal health before breeding her. It's also important to maintain that health and throughout her pregnancy. But how can you be sure she's getting everything she needs?

VITAL NUTRIENTS FOR A HEALTHY PREGNANCY

Some of the key nutrients needed for health, reproduction and fetal growth include:

- VITAMINS: Vitamin A, E, D, D3, B12, B8 (inositol), thiamine (B1), riboflavin (B2) and pantothenic acid (B5).
- MACROMINERALS: The essential minerals calcium, magnesium, sodium, potassium and phosphorus are classified as macrominerals, meaning the body needs them in larger amounts.
- MICROMINERALS: Iron, copper, manganese zinc, chromium, iodine, sulfur and selenium are equally important, but are required in smaller amounts.
- CHOLINE AND FOLIC ACID: Key nutrients for development and a healthy nervous system

WHAT ARE THESE VITAMINS AND MINERALS FOR?

- PHOSPHORUS: Bones and muscle, protein assimilation
- CALCIUM: Bones, milk, immunity, disease resistance, muscle relaxation
- MAGNESIUM: Bones, enzymes, nerve calming, heart health
- SODIUM: For its electrolytes, balancing body fluids, endocrine support
- VITAMIN A: Epithelial tissue, immune system, liver, kidneys, adrenal glands, inflammation reduction
- SULFUR: Key to amino acids
- ZINC: Needed as enzyme in over 200 reactions in the body, as well as immune system and liver, keeps inflammation down
- MANGANESE: Known as the feminine mineral, it balances with iron, the masculine mineral; all females (plants included) need manganese to "flower" and be good mothers; require [illegible] part of many enzymes and for joint tissue support
- COPPER: Blood, enzymes, adrenal gland function
- COBALT: Used by hindgut flora to produce vitamin B12
- IRON: Liver, blood
- POTASSIUM: Electrolyte that works with sodium at cellular level; also benefits heart and adrenal function

MINERAL AVAILABILITY AND METABOLISM

Most deficiencies in animals are the result of altered mineral relationships within the body. Both the retention and loss of minerals are as important as the nutrients consumed through food, and are valuable in determining dietary needs as well as for supplement recommendations at all stages of life.

The image below is called "the mineral wheel". It shows how every mineral is in some way connected to every other mineral. It also indicates how a deficiency or excess of any one could affect all the others.