



That “weird thing,” hay steaming, cures a debilitating cough.

Lynda Goodfriend’s new horse, Brooke, was fine for the first month after arriving in the Los Angeles area from Oregon last fall. “Then all of a sudden she started coughing a little bit when she went to work,” says Lynda, a dressage enthusiast. “It got worse, with a lot of nasal discharge. Then, it got much worse and she really could not take a step without severe coughing.”

The mare’s vet first suspected a common cold and treated it as such. That didn’t help. Neither did the next step: steroids to suppress inflammation. Environmental allergies were the next cause considered, but even if that was identified as the culprit, the only cure -- moving Brooke to a different area - was not an option. Lynda works full-time and needs to be relatively close to her horse in order to have time to enjoy her.

“Ultimately, I decided I had to be the one to figure it out,” Lynda shares. Hay was the recurring theme in her research into allergies. The mare had been on orchard grass, as she had been in Oregon. A switch to timothy hay that appeared to be cleaner and less dusty reduced the mare’s cough a little, but not enough. “Then I read about the Haygain Hay Steamer, and It all made sense. And if nothing else, it sounded like the hay would taste better and be healthier.”

“She has gotten much better,” says Lynda of her 13-year-old Dutch Warmblood by Indoctro. The previously severe coughing reduced to one or two sputters at the beginning of exercise. Those went away when Lynda added an extra step of wetting the shavings in Brooke’s stall to dampen the dust they produce.

Indeed, hay and shavings are the biggest contributors to poor air quality inside the barn. Even hay that looks good and has high quality nutrient content can be loaded with breathable irritants. These microscopic bits of dust, mold, bacteria and allergens can nestle deep in the lungs. The body’s inflammatory response kicks in and all the sudden an otherwise perfectly health horse is not breathing easy anymore.



What’s That Weird Thing?

Multiple studies show that over 80% of active sport horses have some degree of respiratory challenge, often without obvious symptoms. An occasional cough, a slower respiratory recovery rate and unexplained poor performance can be early indicators of a problem. As conditions on the Equine Asthma Spectrum are becoming better understood by veterinarians and owners, Haygain’s high temperature hay steaming is emerging as an effective method for treating, managing and preventing diseases of the upper and lower airway.

A full-time career as a college professor prevents Lynda from getting to the barn every day. Her groom has found it easy to incorporate daily steaming and Lynda handles it herself on Sundays. “It’s quite simple to do.”

June 2020 - Bad Things In Good Hay

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