

Spotlight: AAEP Horse Owner Education Committee

By Elizabeth Gorrell, DVM

Focused on providing quality horse owner education and comprised of 14 equine veterinarians from diverse backgrounds, practice types and experience, the AAEP Horse Owner Education (HOE) Committee is in its third year as a standalone committee to support the owner education needs of AAEP members.

Committee mission

To review and update existing AAEP horse owner education resource materials to ensure both relevancy and accuracy; to establish an ongoing process for new content development; and to develop strategies for client communication relative to the sustainability issue facing the profession.

Recurring projects

1. Client education webinars are held quarterly on various health topics, with foal care, biosecurity and mythbusters covered thus far in 2025. Preparing your horse to age will be the subject of our next webinar. Horse owners can submit questions during registration and during the webinars, all of which are available for on-demand viewing on AAEP's YouTube channel ([youtube.com/@AAEPVideo](https://www.youtube.com/@AAEPVideo)).
2. HOE Committee material is used regularly in AAEP Facebook mythbusters and fun facts posts to provide engaging educational material for horse owners. These posts have been well liked and shared by owners and practices.
3. Short how-to videos show owners how to perform various routine tasks, including taking vitals, changing a hoof bandage and removing a shoe. A cross benefit has been engagement of our student population, who enjoy being in the videos.

Past successes

1. Review and update of horse owner education material on the AAEP website included evaluating legacy horse health

articles before transferring to the redesigned AAEP website. The assessment categorized articles into those that needed to be removed, edited or were acceptable without edits. Articles requiring edits were updated and then uploaded to the new website. Moving forward, the committee will continue to monitor and add content to the horse owner section of the website.

2. In collaboration with the AVMA, the committee developed the **Effective Equine Care Guide** to improve communication with horse owners to help manage expectations regarding what equine veterinarians need from owners and what owners can expect from their equine veterinary team. This sets clear expectations among all members of the equine care team, which leads to greater trust and better care for the horse. The guide, available at <https://tinyurl.com/yckhhe4z>, can be included in new client materials, on clinic websites or with other horse owner communications that clinics might use.
3. Posting of a tips for a safe vet visit infographic on Facebook and Instagram in May helped set up the horse owner for a successful visit with their veterinarian. Examples include having a safe area in which to work (pictured), wearing appropriate footwear, and minimizing distractions such as your phone, etc. The easily digestible format helps owners understand, retain and share the information with others.

Future plans

The committee's next focus will be educational projects targeting children, parents and new horse owners. Development of **Horse 101** resources will clearly explain topics for horse owners with no or limited



knowledge to help them be a better member of the horse health care team and a great client for their equine veterinarian.

The **Ask A Vet** project is being revamped to better serve horse owners. Currently, questions are solicited from horse owners on Facebook and generating limited responses. A Facebook post with the question and the answer provided by a committee member is then posted and has garnered good engagement. The committee will be evaluating other methods to source questions from horse owners.

The HOE Committee is here to support AAEP members. The committee loves feedback from the AAEP membership on what topics they would like covered, webinar ideas or other resources the committee can provide to help veterinarians. If you have any feedback, a topic idea or a resource that would help, please contact Dr. Gorrell at egorrelldvm@gmail.com

Dr. Gorrell is the chair of the Horse Owner Education Committee.