

Vets and Farriers Working Together

DR. STEPHEN E. O'GRADY

The Natural Angle presented a group of questions regarding vet/farrier relations to Stephen O'Grady, DVM, MRCVS. His thoughtful responses may give you some guidance when confronted with various foot problems and sensitive issues involving lameness and lower limb problems. Dr. O'Grady's background as a farrier before becoming a veterinarian and his continued work with lower limb problems offers a unique perspective on questions facing the farrier, veterinarian and horse owner.

When should a farrier call a vet?

The farrier should call when:

1. Any unexplained lameness is observed when the horse is brought out to be shod.
2. Any situation occurs in which live tissue is exposed or blood is noted such as:
 - a. sole punctured with hoof knife
 - b. bleeding quarter crack or infected toe crack
 - c. infected corn
 - d. extensive white line disease
 - e. canker
3. There is a puncture wound in sole or frog of foot.
4. There is a deep abscess.
5. Radiographs are needed:

- a. to assess sole depth
 - b. to assess conformation of foot, i.e. long toe/low heel syndrome, hoof pastern axis
 - c. suspected rotation
 - d. to determine the extent of white line disease
 - e. to rule out solar margin fractures that can mimic sole bruising
6. There are limb abnormalities in foals, i.e. angular limb and flexural deformities.

When should a veterinarian call a farrier?

A veterinarian should call when:

1. The veterinarian feels that the present shoeing may be implicated as a cause of or

a contributing factor in a given lameness (This should generally be done without the owner's knowledge).

2. Lameness or disease is localized to the foot and shoeing is part of the therapy.
3. Hoof conformation needs to be corrected in order to prevent lameness.
4. Extensive hoof wall defects resulting in lameness that need to be repaired (especially if defect involves live tissue).
5. Farrier input is necessary on a particular problem such as building a shoe or brace to treat a problem above the foot.
6. To have a cup of coffee.

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1 - Live tissue exposed or bleeding. **2** - Quarter crack. **3** - Extensive White line Disease. **4** - Deep abscess.



Vets & Farriers

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How should consultation be conducted?

Consultation should be conducted in person with the case (horse) if possible, so diagnosis can be discussed and a treatment agreed upon.

What are common problems in consultations?

1. Lack of adequate discussion.
2. Resentment of either party by the other.
3. Disagreement over therapy.
4. Treatment by “fad” by either party instead of looking at individual case.
5. Level of skill.
 - a. Farrier - extent of training equals ability to build required shoe.
 - i) experience
 - ii) practicality
 - iii) innovation
 - iv) lack of continuing education
 - b. Veterinarian.
 - i) amount of lameness work performed
 - ii) familiarity with farrier profession and the newest concepts
6. Continuing education.
 - a. Veterinarian - lack of attendance of veterinarians at meetings devoted to podiatry, i.e. Laminitis Symposium, AFA Convention, etc.
 - b. Farrier - lack of attendance at local farrier clinics, FPD clinics, etc.
7. Egos- both sides.

There must be a mutual **professional** respect between the veterinarian and the farrier in order to have a successful vet/farrier relationship.

How should the vet and farrier handle disagreements on proposed treatment?

1. Disagreements should always be handled through discussion if possible.
2. If the case cannot be competently handled by either the veterinarian or the farrier, that individual should refer the case to a party more experienced to handle the situation in question.
3. With most lameness or disease related problems of the hoof, there is the medical



5 - Sole Bruise. 6 - Club foot.



aspect which makes the veterinarian responsible for the overall case and places him or her in charge.

From your perspective, what (and when) are important steps necessary to get the best radiographs?

Radiographs should always be top quality.

This requires:

1. Good foot preparation (**without shoes**)
2. Good x-ray cassettes and screens.
3. Good radiographic techniques.

Radiographs are useful for:

1. General foot conformation.
2. Hoof/pastern axis.
3. Long toe/low heel.
4. Club foot.
5. Flat feet to determine sole depth.
6. Laminitis.
7. White line disease.
8. Heel lameness.
9. Lameness localized to the foot without obvious diagnoses (fractures, foot bruising, keratoma, osteomyelitis, etc).

What are some important reference points in radiographs?

1. Wire embedded in surface of radiograph block.
2. Wire on dorsal (front)

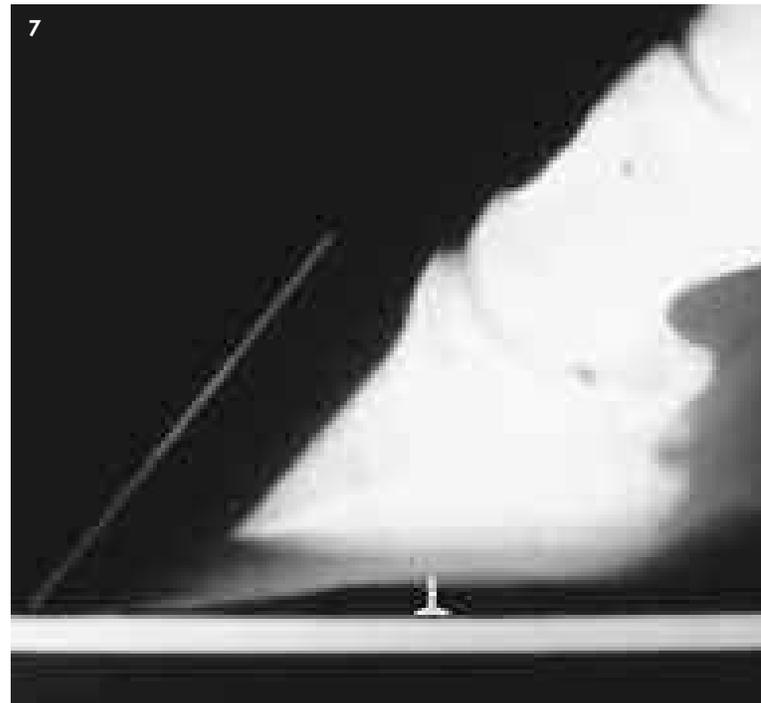
7 - Markers for good radiographs.

hoof wall.

3. Thumb tack 3/8” back from point of trimmed frog.
4. Small screws at coronary band.
5. Markers at heels, if necessary.

It should be noted that, for accuracy, the opposite foot from the one being radiographed should be placed on a block of equal height. ■

Dr. O’Grady currently practices from The Plains, Virginia area, operating the Northern Virginia Equine Practice. He has practiced in South Africa as well as other areas of the U.S. He understands the sensitivity and complexity of the questions facing veterinarians and farriers and has shared his experience and ideas with farriers through articles in veterinary publications and the American Farriers Journal. He currently serves on the Editorial Advisory Board of the AFJ and the Farriers Liaison Committee of the AAEP. If interested, you can contact Dr. O’Grady at 540-253-5144 or by email at sogrady@looknet.com.



Foot Finish

BY DAVE FARLEY

Your customers may never lift the foot to check your work but you can be sure they take a good look at the hoof as the horse is standing in front of them. A few minutes spent on a good finish will go a long way in keeping your customers happy.

We start our finish work when we pull the shoes. This work, as with most of the finish work, is done on the foot stand. This allows us to take a good look at the hoof and get some of the finish work done as a part of pulling the shoes. After cutting the clinches, we use the file side of the rasp to clean up the wall and begin to shape the hoof. We like to use the Bellota rasp which doesn't have a real coarse file side. One thing we want to avoid are deep marks in the wall. Doing this work now also keeps us from having to worry about rasping around the clinches (or clips) after nailing the shoes on.

At this point we pull the shoes, using a crease nail puller to avoid any wall damage.

After pulling the shoes be sure to clean the wall all the way to the end of the heels. It's sometimes difficult to get to this area when the shoe is on.

After nailing, we bring the foot back to the stand and use the undercut before clinching to avoid marking the wall. Once we've clinched we

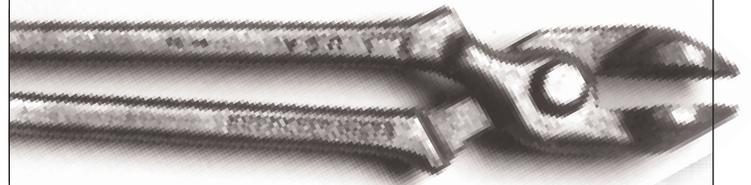


1 - On foot stand, use file side to begin clean up.
2 - Crease nail puller minimizes hoof damage.
3 - Clean up heel area after pulling shoe.



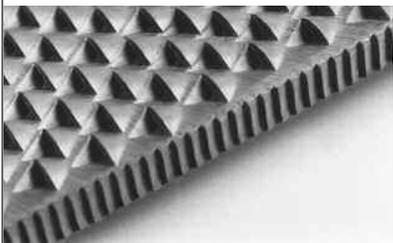
lightly file the foot if needed. By using the undercut we can often bypass this step and go right to the sanding block. A CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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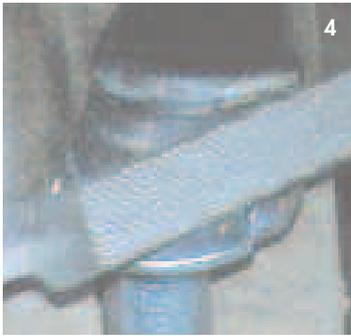


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New Products



4 - After clinching, use file side if needed. 5 - Sanding block provides smooth finish. 6 - Sealant is final touch.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3
good run with the sanding block should remove any file marks.

Our final step is to apply a sealant like Tuff Stuff. This can help with maintenance of the hoof. It only takes a minute and the customers appreciate the extra touch. Remember what they see when you're finished. ■



Swanstrom Nippers
Swanstrom Tools, USA of Superior, Wisconsin is manufacturing two nippers for the farrier market. The 12" and 14" nippers are built to demanding standards with high quality tool steel. One of the noteworthy features is the replaceable head concept. The heads are carefully machined and pinned for maximum performance. They can be rebuilt like any nipper but when they reach a point that rebuilding is no longer possible the factory can replace the heads. The rest of the tool is reconditioned and you basically have a new tool for approximately 30% less cost. This is really a savings when you have an otherwise good tool ruined by cutting through a nail or something other than hoof wall.

Australian Horse Shoe Nails
The Australian Horse Shoe Nail Company now offers five sizes of nails to choose from. The photo gives you a good comparison of the nail sizes and particularly the head sizes. You can easily see



the proportionate change in the head sizes from 5 Slim to 5 Light to 5 Race. This difference in head sizes gives you some logical choices. As an example, the 5 Slim head fits well in the 5/16" thick Kerckhaert SX-8. The 5 Light will give you a better fit in the thinner SX-7. For a flush fit in the SX-7 you could choose the 5 Race. In general, the 5 Light and 5 Race will suit lighter shoes or

1 - Swanstrom Nippers. 2 - Australian Horse Shoe Nail line.

shoes with small punching. The 4-1/2 Race and 3-1/2 Race are typical race nails, although the 3-1/2 has a slightly larger head to fit better in aluminum race plates.

The nails are all packed in 250 piece boxes, 20 boxes to a case. They are available now. ■

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Shoe Modification: Lateral Toe Extension

This one heat modification can be used with some success on a young toed-in horse. As always with a young horse be sure you are not over correcting. The modification can also be useful to help square up the breakover of a hoof that is distorted, damaged or has the outside toe worn off. ■



1 - Heat toe. Using round side of hammer on the foot surface of shoe, start extension. **2** - Using edge of round side of hammer draw extension to desired size. **3, 4** - Using flat side of hammer, clean up and blend edges of extension. Do this over horn. **5** - Modification nailed on foot. **6** - Note toed in posture before applying shoe. **7** - Correction after application.



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