



RESEARCH

MEMBERSHIP EQUINE RESEARCH STUDY



FOUNDATION, INC.



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GENERAL REPORT

Background

Founded in 1994, the AAEP Foundation Inc. is managed by the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP), a professional association of 6,500 equine veterinarians worldwide. The AAEP represents a group of men and women dedicated to the health and welfare of the horse, covering a broad range of equine disciplines and breeds. Through a commitment to research, continuing education for the veterinarian and the horse owner and advocacy on behalf of the horse, the AAEP and its members have directed the focus of equine veterinary medicine for nearly 50 years.

A key element of the mission of the AAEP Foundation is to act as a coordinator of equine research and to serve the equine industry by defining the greatest needs in the realm of equine health throughout the United States and around the world.

In an effort to establish the needs for equine research and gather the necessary data to accomplish this portion of the mission of the Foundation, the following online survey was conducted in 2003. The study was conducted to assess the thoughts and opinions of the AAEP membership to be used in defining and prioritizing the needs in the field of equine health research.

The study was distributed online to all AAEP members with an active e-mail address on file with the AAEP office (approximately 75% of the membership). Members were required to complete an online survey containing both multiple choice and open-ended questions. The report was executed and tabulated through the use of an online survey service system.

Results

Profile of Respondents

The report was sent to 3,500 members. The number of completed surveys returned at the time of this report totaled 515.

Nearly 80% of respondents were from the United States, with another 6% from Canada and the remaining percentage being from other countries.

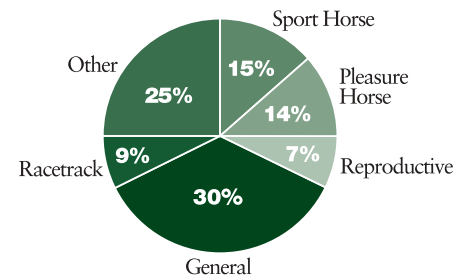
The type of practice each member represented was primarily general practices, followed by practices indicating other, sport horse, pleasure horse, racetrack and reproductive, respectively.

Over 50% of the respondents indicated that they had been in practice for more than 15 years. The remaining respondents were fairly equal in representation of 11 to 15 years, six to 10 years and five years or less, with an average of 16% in each category.

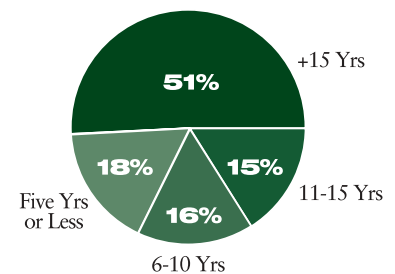


Lori Schmidt, 2003

Type of Practice



Years in Practice





Pressing Equine Healthcare Problems

When asked to list the most pressing equine healthcare problems each respondent currently faced and desired more answers for, only two categories achieved over 10% recognition from the respondents. These were laminitis and lameness. Following closely in importance were joint disease/injury, podiatry, reproduction, respiratory, colic and infectious disease.

While other diseases and conditions were listed, they did not receive greater than 5% recognition from the respondents.

Body Systems

When asked to rank body systems in the order of importance for research needs, musculoskeletal system was ranked highest from the choices given, with 93% of respondents ranking this system as being either extremely important or important.

Following in order of importance under the same criteria were gastrointestinal at 87%, respiratory system at 87%, nervous system at 72%, endocrine system at 65% and cardiovascular system at 53%. All remaining systems scored less than 50% recognition.

Importance of body systems in terms of research needs	Not at all Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Extremely Important
Musculoskeletal System	2%	5%	27%	66%
Respiratory System	1%	12%	44%	43%
Gastrointestinal System	1%	12%	40%	47%
Urogenital System	7%	53%	30%	10%
Nervous System	4%	25%	46%	25%
Special Senses System	16%	58%	22%	4%
Integument System	9%	56%	27%	8%
Endocrine System	4%	31%	42%	23%
Cardiovascular System	8%	39%	42%	11%

Disease Categories

Using the same scale of importance, members were asked to rate disease categories relative to the need for research:

Leading in importance were the categories of infectious disease at 89%, exercise-related at 78%, degenerative at 74%, metabolic at 71%, nutrition at 69%, endocrine at 64% and trauma at 62%.

Of the ten most important diseases or disease categories that respondents felt required further research, laminitis had the highest return at 83%. Following were colic with 66%, lameness with 55%, arthritis with 48%, navicular disease with 47%, tendon injuries with 44%, suspensory ligament injuries with 43%, OCD with 37%, COPD with 36% and WNV with 30%.

Nearly 80% of respondents indicated they would be willing to participate in research by recording data from specific types of cases and control animals in their practice.



Resource Tools

Of the many valuable resources that members can use as tools to learn about new research, the AAEP Annual Convention was ranked highest with 88% of respondents ranking this option as either extremely important or important. Other continuing education meetings followed with 79% in the same categories.

Following were *The Equine Veterinary Journal* and *Equine Veterinary Education*, ranking 68% and 62% respectively. *The Journal of American Veterinary Medical Association*, *Compendium* and *The American Journal of Veterinary Research* had returns of 57%, 48% and 45% respectively.

Nearly 70% of respondents felt that e-mail services such as the ECN or the AAEP listserv were good sources of information.

Lastly, just over 50% of the respondents indicated that they were aware of currently funded research projects in equine medicine.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The results from the study indicated that the average AAEP member veterinarian responding to the survey was a U.S. resident in general practice who has been in practice for over 15 years. Of all available equine research, the respondents believe that more information is needed on lameness, laminitis and navicular disease and the musculoskeletal system overall. Respondents also placed a high level of importance on colic and gastrointestinal disorders as well as on research on infectious diseases. The vast majority indicated that they would be willing to serve in a research capacity by recording data at their practice.



About half of the respondents feel that they are adequately kept abreast of ongoing research. While they indicated that e-mail communication is a valuable tool in staying abreast of new information, the overwhelming majority feels that the best source to learn of new findings is at continuing education meetings with the majority preferring the AAEP Annual Convention.

The results of this study are to be shared with partner organizations, foundations and the equine industry in general, for their use. In addition, the AAEP will forward its findings to the USDA for its use in prioritizing equine research on a national level and evaluating the necessary financial appropriations to those projects.

The AAEP Foundation, Inc.

Using the expertise of world-renowned equine caregivers and researchers, the AAEP Foundation is unequalled in its ability to identify the most critical health concerns facing the equine population. By working in alliance with other foundations, including the American Quarter Horse Foundation, the Morris Animal Foundation and The Grayson-Jockey Club Foundation, the AAEP Foundation is dedicated to research that will improve equine health. This strong coalition ensures that veterinarians, veterinary students and horse owners benefit from its work through the development of educational programs that share the best methods for the diagnosis and treatment of equine medical conditions.





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