Ontario Equestrian Supports Gut Research

“Gastrointestinal disease in horses is probably the number one cause of all illness,” says Ontario Veterinary College researcher Dr. Luis Arroyo. His research team is hard at work investigating how microorganisms in the gut can get out of control and cause disease. Greater understanding in this area could be the key to future prevention and better management. Arroyo states, “We are using the latest technological tools (Robo-gut) and methods to tackle this issue. The results could have far reaching impact to the international equine population.”

Research funding provided by Ontario Equestrian will be used in part to purchase an anaerobic chamber gut that will be used to handle strictly anaerobic bacteria (bacteria that do not need oxygen to survive) and supplies to run the culture experiments of such organisms.

Robo-gut, designed originally for studies in humans, is an integral approach that mimics the natural environment where microbial communities live. The apparatus allows researchers to learn how the gut microbes can be affected by several factors. Changes can be reproduced in the laboratory using Robo-gut and have proven extremely useful in studying gastrointestinal disorders in humans.

Gastrointestinal illness such as colic and colitis can affect any horse. The equine industry suffers large economical loses due to preventive and sick animal treatments, days lost to training and competition, and crippling complications or death. A better understanding of gastrointestinal disorders in horses is very much in need and of great value to the industry and equine health in general.

Diarrhea continues to cause morbidity and mortality in Ontario horses and worldwide. “This research has the potential to impact equine health beyond borders”, says Arroyo. “Very few laboratories/researchers are currently invested in finding out the cause(s) of gastrointestinal disorders in horses and this kind of research is very much in need.”

Learn more about this research or donate.

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Check out these research story links:

- Guelph PhD student takes on Leaky Gut in horses
- Readers Digest New Chapter on Gut Bugs
- Guelph researchers spurred by interest in the use of equine training equipment in Canada
- Equine Guelph funded research investigates steamed, soaked and dry hay in Ontario
- Dr. James Raeside Honoured with Lifetime Achievement Award in Equine Reproduction
- Pilot Study looks at On-Farm Welfare Assessment Tool for Equines in Canada
- Airway Disease in Racehorses More Prevalent Than Previously Thought, Study Reveals
- Major Threats to Equine Welfare Identified in Research Study

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Anyone wishing to excerpt Equine Guelph should contact jbellamy@uoguelph.ca

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