2011 Animal Science Social & Livestock Leader Award
By Bob Stobart

On Saturday, January 14, 2012, Dr. Cleon Kimberling was awarded the Animal Science Social & Livestock Leader award. This was presented to him by the College of Agricultural Sciences, Colorado State University. Dr. Kimberling retired from his role as Extension Sheep Veterinarian for the State of Colorado in 2005 after 40+ years. Dr. “K”, as he was known also taught in the Veterinary School and took his students through Colorado and southern Wyoming to give them a feel for the sheep industry and the health and management problems our producers faced. Dr. K or Cleon, is well known and highly respected by the of sheep producers in Wyoming. I am honored to have been able to work with Cleon on many projects that had tremendous benefit to our producers and the sheep industry in general. We had many projects that we collaborated on; additionally he was a gold mine of information. When I had questions regarding health issues and some management issues, if I didn’t know the answer, a quick phone call to Cleon and I had an answer that everyday people could understand.

This was a great honor to Dr. Kimberling for his dedication and service to the sheep industry in Colorado and Wyoming. Please congratulate him the next time you have to opportunity to interact with him.
Do you know your horse’s normal vital signs? If you work or are around equine it’s essential you know your animal’s normal parameters. Knowing what your horse’s normal heart rate, respiration, and temperature can make a difference when treating your horse if he becomes ill or finds himself in an emergency. The horse’s heart rate is a measure of arterial blood flow or the contraction of arteries that produces the “heart beat.” Typically, the resting heart rate of the horse is around 32-45 beats per minute but can vary depending on the time of the day you take its heart rate. The normal range for a donkey’s heart rate tends to be a little higher with an average of 48 beats/min. Ideally, a stethoscope can be used to assess the heart rate by placing it under the left elbow or you can simply place two index fingers on the inside of the jaw and palpate for the round artery. Count the number of beats within 15 seconds and then multiply by four. An elevate heart rate may indicate your horse is experience some type of stress such as physical or environmental. Elevated heart rate is often associated with colic and even laminitis.

Respiration rate is another vital sign you should know be able to recognize the normal rate for your horse. Respiration rate refers to your horse’s respiratory system and how many breathes per minute he’s taking. The normal range is from 8-16 breathes per minute. If the respiration rate is above the normal range this could be a sign of stress or illness such as a fever, pain or even an obstruction in the trachea or part of the respiratory system in your horse. You can measure your horse’s respiration rate by watching the rise and fall of his chest or the flare in his nostril. Count the breaths he takes per 30 seconds and multiply by 2.

The temperature of the horse like the respiration and heart rate is often times elevated when a horse is sick or stressed or both. The normal resting temperature for a horse is typically around 99.5-100.5 °F. However, donkeys generally run lower than horses and we consider the average to be 98.6 °F and mules are closer to horses around 99.18. In order to take your horse’s rectal temperature you will need a water-soluble lubricant or petroleum jelly and ideally a digital thermometer. If you are using a glass thermometer that I personally don’t recommend with fear of the glass breaking you should set your timer for 2 minutes after inserting the thermometer into the rectum. Other areas to consider evaluating when assessing your horse’s well-being and vital signs are the color of the mucous membrane, capillary refill time, as well as gut sounds if colic is of concern. The mucous membrane color refers to the color of your horse’s gums. The normal color should appear to pale pink. Any variations from this color maybe a sign of issues with the circulatory system. You can check your horse’s mucous membrane color by pulling up his upper lip and observing the color of the gum above the upper incisors. If a dark purple color is seen this could be a sign that the heart is not effectively working and blood is pooling in an area and shock or toxemia is a threat. If the gum appears very pale in color then this could suggest that the horse is anemic or the heart again is not properly functioning and the horse has gone into shock. While you have your horse’s upper lip raised observing the color of the gum you can also check your horse’s capillary refill time by simply pressing your one of your fingers into the upper gum of your horse. This will measure the time it takes blood to refill into the area you have applied pressure. Ideally, blood should return within 1 to 3 seconds.

Hopefully these tips will help keep your horse healthy! For additional information on your horse’s red blood cell and white blood cell counts for future reference consider having your veterinarian pull a blood sample and have a chemical blood analysis run. This information can be very helpful if and when your horse gets sick because like the vital signs your veterinarian will then have normal parameters to compare to and hopefully be able to better diagnose and treat your horse’s problem.
**January Talking Points**

*By Scott Lake*

**Nighttime is right time to feed expectant cows**

*Land & Livestock Post*

It is generally accepted that adequate supervision at calving has a significant positive effect on reducing calf mortality, which has been of increasing importance with the use of larger beef breeds and cattle with larger birth weights.

See full article at: [http://www.landandlivestockpost.com/printerfriendly/Nighttime-is-right-time-to-feed-expectant-cows](http://www.landandlivestockpost.com/printerfriendly/Nighttime-is-right-time-to-feed-expectant-cows)

**Short feeding and carcass quality**

*Drovers*

High grain prices and cost of gain in the feedyard have driven recent interest in managing cattle to heavier weights on forage, followed by shorter finishing periods on grain-based rations.


**Optimizing beef carcass weight through understanding carcass cost of gain**

*Minnesota Farm Guide*

Rising prices for cattle, along with high costs-of-gain (CoG) for feeding, force producers to routinely analyze the optimum time, or end point, for selling fed cattle.

The logical end point to maximize return per animal is to feed cattle until the selling price matches the CoG for feeding.