



Q&A FROM A HORSE DENTIST

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REPAIR IT OR REPLACE IT

Not that it's a question I'm asked but a comment I often hear, "we won't worry about him – he's for sale". After attending dental school and learning of the benefits horse dentistry can make in the performance of the horse, I thought back on all the horses I sold over the years under the aspis of "there are too many good horses in the world to suffer through _____ (behavioral problem). Or, "he is a great horse but he can't seem to get his head around _____." I have often wonder how many horses I've personally sold, that had a particular quirk or behavior problem that just had *bad teeth*.

In selling thirteen head of horses last year, I felt I gained at least \$500 per head simply because I had performed dentistry on each of them regardless their age or level of training. The cost of the dentistry was minimal (\$155 – \$205) to its benefits. Because they were more comfortable and responsive to the bit, I believe they sold easier.

I have a number of clients that buy, train (do the dentistry) then sell, horses. Believing that dentistry will make the progression of training easier and the final sale price, easily compensate for the cost of dentistry. Regardless of the level of training a particular horse has at the time of purchase – being comfortable and responsive to the hardware in his mouth is a bonus when it comes to selling the horse.

Doing business in this progressive manner also cements good relations with their new owner. Reports have been favorable with the balance and performance of the horse that continues to work well. I have also thought it was a better practice to tell the new owners "*his next dental appointment is . . .*" rather than, as the trailer door closes, "*you might want to get his teeth checked*".

Remember, all undesirable actions are compensatory to any point of pain and attributes to a horse's balance. If you are experiencing undesirable behaviors while riding your horse, have a certified equine dentist take a look and get the answer '*straight from your horse's mouth*'.

If you have a question about your horse's teeth and how they might relate to his health or performance call 1-306-266-2060, 1-403-936-5394, 1-208-420-2701 or e-mail your question to mackequine@sasktel.net.