

## **SESSION 5 EQUINE VETERINARY MEDICINE**

### **\*\*SAFETY NOTICE\*\***

**Safety concerns are a greater issue when working around large animals such as horses (equine) than when handling companion animals. Serious injuries and even death may result. Though the use of patient restraint (physical, chemical, or both) is a paramount tool for the safety and welfare of both the animal and those working around the animal, it is still easy to be kicked, bitten, struck by the animal's head, or even run over and trampled by an animal that is bigger, stronger, and heavier than a human. Post Advisors and leaders must stress to participants the importance of being aware of the animal's body language and always following the instructions of whomever is in charge of the animal.**

### **DESCRIPTION OF SESSION**

This session provides the participants with an introductory understanding of the field of equine veterinary medicine. Participants may have the opportunity to interact with various different breeds and species of equine and learn about the different uses of these animals.

### **CATEGORY**

- Health
- Veterinary Medicine

### **OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Discuss the different species and breeds of equine that an equine veterinarian may work with.
- Discuss the safety concerns one must consider when working with equines.
- Discuss the different health care services an equine veterinarian might provide.
- Understand the most common health care issues that an equine veterinarian handles.
- Identify some of the equipment and instruments used in caring for equine patients.
- Identify some of the challenges and benefits of being an equine veterinarian.
- Understand the educational requirements for veterinarians entering this field, including high school and college courses that would be beneficial.

### **SUPPLIES**

- Laptop computer or equipment to view videos
- Examples of various equine medicine instruments and equipment
- Stethoscope

## **ADVISOR NOTE:**

As you engage your post in activities each meeting, please include comments, discussions, and feedback to the group relating to **Character, Leadership, and Ethics**. These are important attributes that make a difference in the success of youth in the workplace and in life.

## **ACTIVITIES**

### **ACTIVITY 1**

#### **Speaker: Introduction to Equine Medicine**

Have the speaker address these topics:

- What is equine medicine? What are the different breeds and species treated? (Include mention of pleasure horses, working stock, draft horses, rodeo stock, feral equine, circus equine, and zoo equine.) What are the most unusual species seen?
- What are some of the major differences and similarities between the work of an equine veterinarian and a companion animal veterinarian?
- Explain the purpose(s) of horseshoeing.
- What are some ethical concerns that an equine veterinarian might encounter?
- What are the requirements to become an equine veterinarian?
- How is emergency/after-hours care provided to equine patients?

### **ACTIVITY 2**

#### **Restraint and Physical Exams**

- Show a video related to doing a complete physical exam on an equine patient. Select a video from a reputable online source or other resource. View videos in advance to make sure they are appropriate.
- Have the veterinarian discuss and demonstrate an organized (head-to-tail or system-by-system) exam procedure. Discuss any species or breed variations that Explorers might encounter.
- Have the veterinarian demonstrate the proper way to take a patient's temperature. Discuss what the expected normal findings should be.
- Have the veterinarian demonstrate the proper way to listen to the animal's heart and lungs. Have the participants auscultate the animal's heart and lungs in the same manner.
- Have Explorers make a chart (or add to the ones they made for another session) to record the animal's temperature, heart rate (pulse), and number of respirations. Design the chart to accommodate numerous animals of different species and breeds that will be examined in other sessions of this curriculum.
- Discuss and demonstrate various methods for proper restraint of equine patients for a physical exam. (Participants will not be involved in moving, restraining, or handling equine patients.)
- Have the veterinarian discuss the proper methods for obtaining blood samples.
- Learn about vices (behavior problems) in horses.

### ACTIVITY 3

#### Tours

- Tour an equine veterinarian's facility (free standing or mobile), and view some of the instruments and equipment used on equine patients. Discuss with the veterinarian proper nutrition, housing, foot care, and routine health care/preventative care practiced at the facility. Learn about the identification systems used for horses (tattoos, nose prints, chips, etc.).
- Watch a farrier perform corrective horseshoeing on a horse or mule.
- Attend a horse show or equine sporting event. Identify the different breeds represented at this activity. Observe the feeding, grooming, and special equipment needed for this event.

#### ADVISOR NOTE

Some sample questions are below. They are designed to help the participants apply what they have learned to their own interests. You are welcome to use these questions or develop your own questions that relate to your post or specific area of focus.

#### REFLECTION

- *What aspects of the equine medicine veterinarian session interested you the most?*
- *What ethical responsibilities does this type of veterinarian have to their patient(s) and the owner of the animal(s)?*
- *What did you learn during this session about the number of services an equine veterinarian provides?*
- *What can you do now, during your time as a student, to prepare yourself for a career in veterinary medicine? Why is this topic important?*

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