Chronic Progressive Lymphedema (CPL)

What is chronic progressive lymphedema (CPL)?
- Debilitating skin condition that occurs primarily in draft horses
- Characterized by swelling, thickening, and scarring of skin on lower legs
- Progresses throughout the life of the horse, often resulting in disfigurement, lameness, disability and premature death in some cases
- The cause is unknown, but there is likely a genetic component based on the high incidence in affected breeds.

What you can do to keep your horse healthy:
- CPL is likely multifactorial and has an underlying genetic component, but no exact cause(s) has been identified.
- There is no “cure” for CPL, but intensive management protocols can slow disease progression and improve quality of life.
- There is currently no clear path to preventing the disease in susceptible breeds.

**Signs**
- Thickening of lower legs
- Infections
- Firm skin folds
- Skin nodules
- Lesions extend up legs
- Exudates between folds

**Transmission**
- No cause(s) identified
- Likely genetic and multifactorial

**Treatment**
- Antibiotics
- Manual lymph drainage massage
- Keep feathers trimmed
- Compression bandages
- Exercise

*If your horse needs medical care, contact the Large Animal Clinic at (530) 752-1393.*