Equine protozoal myeloencephalitis

What is equine protozoal myeloencephalitis?
• Infection of the central nervous system with protozoan parasites *Sarcocystis neurona* and *Neospora hughesi*
• Progressively debilitating disease
• Opossums shed infective sporocysts in their feces. Horses become infected by ingesting contaminated food or water.
• In <1% of cases, ingested sporocysts migrate into the bloodstream, cross the blood/brain barrier, and attack the nervous system.

What you can do to keep your horse healthy:
• Decrease stress
• Reduce exposure to opossum feces
• Feed horses in feeders and not on the ground
• Maintain separate fresh water sources
• Prevent wildlife access to where horses are housed
• Keep feed rooms and containers closed
• Clean up dropped grain

**Signs**
- Gait abnormalities
- Incoordination
- Ataxia
- Spasticity
- Muscle atrophy
- Lethargy
- Behavioral changes

**Transmission**
- Ingestion of feed or water contaminated with opossum feces

**Treatment**
• FDA-approved anticoccidial drug
• NSAIDs
• Corticosteroids, DMSO
• Vitamin E

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