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Get to Know PBEC's Dr. Sarah Allendorf *by Lauren Fisher, Jump Media*



Dr. Sarah Allendorf grew up in London, Ontario, Canada, and completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Guelph in Ontario. She earned her Master's degree in Experimental Surgery from McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, and then earned her Veterinary degree at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. After completing an internship at Fairfield Equine & Associates in Newtown, Connecticut, Dr. Allendorf joined the team at Palm Beach Equine Clinic in September 2015.

Read on to find out more!

What is your background with horses?

As a child, I was not the most athletically gifted; I could not throw or catch a ball to save my life. In an attempt to combine my interest in animals with an after school activity, my father suggested trying horseback riding lessons. Over the course of the next decade, I went from riding Western Pleasure to showing in the Hunter/Jumper discipline. I competed until I

was about 16 when my education began to take priority, though I still ride for my own personal enjoyment.

When and why did you decide to become a veterinarian?

I wanted to become a veterinarian since I was approximately three years old. Once it was explained to me that there were individuals in charge of the health and welfare of animals, I never wanted to do anything else.

My journey began by attending the University of Guelph and obtaining an Honours Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences. I went on to earn a Master's degree in Experimental Surgery with a specific focus in Orthopaedics from McGill University. Upon completion of my MSc, I was granted the opportunity to study veterinary medicine at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.



Several of the veterinarians at PBEC have studied in the UK. What was that experience like for you?

I really enjoyed living in Scotland - it is such a beautiful country! The University of Edinburgh's veterinary program is very practically based, and we received a lot of hands-on experience doing animal husbandry training, in addition to the medical aspects. I had the opportunity to spend two weeks working on a dairy farm and three weeks lambing in the English countryside. Apart from the world-class education, another of the biggest perks of living in the UK is the amazing travel opportunities, including two weeks working in South Africa with a wildlife veterinarian.

Was there anyone influential in your career?

I have worked with a lot of amazing people throughout my training and career, not just veterinarians, but technicians, hospital staff, and owners. It is difficult to say which one person influenced me the most. What I attempt to do in all interactions is observe how each professional approaches a situation, the strategies they use, and the different techniques individuals

employ. This has given me an arsenal of knowledge that helps me to adapt to each patient and each situation.

Do you have a specialty?

My main focus is Sport Horse medicine including lameness exams, performance evaluations, and diagnostics. I am available for general health work ups, preventative care, and emergencies - basically whatever my clients need at any given time, day or night.

Additionally, I am currently getting certified in Acupuncture at the Chi Institute of Chinese Herbal Medicine in Ocala.

What do you like most about working at PBEC?

Palm Beach Equine Clinic has a fantastic team. There are many veterinarians and specialists on-site, which provides a unique opportunity for collaboration and continual professional growth. It is also incredible to work in Wellington during the season here; in the equine world, it is the place to be in the winter.

Are there any unique experiences that you have had working at PBEC?

I had the unique experience to travel on a private plane to Puerto Rico for the day to perform a pre-purchase examination with my boss, Dr. Jorge Gomez. Not only was that an educational experience, but it was a lot of fun. Not that many jobs allow for international day trips.

During the summer season, I am on the road moving between Kentucky, North Carolina, and New York. As a permitted FEI treating veterinarian, I was available to clients at the Tryon International Equestrian Center and the Kentucky Horse Park as well as the Hampton Classic, HITS Saugerties, the American Gold Cup, and the Rolex Central Park Horse Show. In the future, I would like work towards becoming an Official FEI Delegate.

What are some of your other interests?

Watching Grand Prix, under the lights of course. Not only do I go to competitions to



support the athletes, both human and equine, but I go because I admire the sport. Being an equine veterinarian is not a 9-5 job. You have to love what you do, because then it's never considered work.

What's New

Palm Beach Equine Clinic Helps to Bring Chinese Herbal Medicine West *by Lindsay Brock, Jump Media*

Chinese herbal medicine is a relatively new treatment among equine veterinarians in the western world, but the philosophy of herbals for healing has existed for thousands of years as part of Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine (TCVM). Helping to lead the Chinese herbal medicine charge westward, Palm Beach Equine Clinic has incorporated the use of herbs and herbal treatments as an integral part of their alternative therapy options for patients.

As humans adapt to using all-natural methods to treat illness, herbal medicine for animals also utilizes ancient Chinese formulas aimed at treating the underlying causes of a disease or illness to help the body heal itself, rather than only temporarily treating the presented symptoms.

One Palm Beach Equine Clinic veterinarian who has found these all natural methods as an benefit in her treatments is Dr. Janet Greenfield-Davis, who specializes in both acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine.

"There is an herbal product for anything,"

said Dr. Greenfield-Davis, who found herbal medicine six years ago when she started specializing in acupuncture, which joins Chinese herbal medicine as two of the most common forms of TCVM therapies. "Herbals treat a variety of ailments from sore muscles to problems affecting the liver, heart, kidneys, joints, and more. I pair the herbals with my acupuncture, which is traditionally the ancient Chinese way."

In TCVM, once a symptom of disharmony in the body or disease is identified, treatment proceeds through four possible branches, including acupuncture, food therapy, a form of Chinese medical massage called Tui-na, and Chinese herbal medicine. From topical treatments, including salves and powders, to edible treatments; Chinese herbal medicine not only draws on natural products, but also on the natural tendencies of the horse itself. Being herbivores, horses ingest herbs found in the wild while they are grazing.

While the traditional methods date back



thousands of years, the treatments developed within Chinese herbal medicine are ever-evolving and coupled with modern technology, historical and ancient Chinese wisdom are still very effective. In addition, the treatments utilize the properties of many common herbs with

widely known uses. Such as ginseng for fatigue, chamomile for calming, garlic as an antibiotic, and arnica as an anti-inflammatory, the recipes used in herbal medicine draw from only natural sources. This fact is making herbal treatments more common among sport horses that undergo drug testing for banned substances while competing.

"The competitive world is accepting herbal medicine more and more every year," said Dr. Greenfield-Davis. "It provides an alternative for horses at high levels, especially in FEI, that need a little extra support. They aren't drugs, they don't test, and they are a natural product."

Dr. Greenfield-Davis believes that offering such alternative treatment options is a sizeable advancement for Palm Beach Equine Clinic, in that herbal medicines provide owners with another option when traditional western medicines may not be their answer.

"It enhances our practice because it gives owners a place to turn," she said. "There is a lot of stigmatism behind using particular western drugs, and I think this gives people a choice; they don't have to use the traditional western medicines anymore because they can now turn to eastern medicines."

While it is a personal choice to use a more holistic or all-natural approach to veterinary care for some horse owners, herbs also represent a practical alternative. According to Dr. Greenfield-Davis, herbal medicine is the perfect choice when treating a horse with an



aversion to needles, or for horses that do not respond to particular medicines or therapies.

"We are able to work in a more natural way instead of using steroids and things of that nature," added Dr. Greenfield-Davis. "In some cases, I will use solely herbals and the treatments produce a lot of wonderful results."

As Palm Beach Equine Clinic continues to advance its alternative medicine therapies, the equestrian community is also learning to accept new possibilities. For Palm Beach Equine Clinic and Dr. Greenfield-Davis, Chinese herbal medicine is a step into the future with a nod to ancient Chinese history.

About Dr. Greenfield-Davis

Dr. Greenfield grew up in Northern California and her passion for horses started during her time showing hunters on the "A" circuit, which later led her to study veterinary medicine at California Polytechnic State University. She graduated from veterinary school at the University of Glasgow in 2010 and has since specialized in equine acupuncture and herbal medicine. Dr. Greenfield hopes to continue her studies in holistic medicine by incorporating food therapy into her treatments at Palm Beach Equine Clinic.

Horse Health Care Tips

Palm Beach Equine Clinic Warns Florida Horse Owners to Check Their Pastures for Toxic Creeping Indigo

The veterinarians at Palm Beach Equine Clinic in Wellington, FL, caution horse owners of recent toxicity cases that have arisen in South Florida suspected by the low growing weed, Creeping Indigo. Although Creeping Indigo is not native to Florida and has been reportedly growing in the state since the 1920s, the plant has recently spread from the past summer's humid conditions. Most toxic plants are not palatable to horses and therefore do not pose as much risk; however, it appears

that horses are eating Creeping Indigo with suspected fatal effects. The only real treatment is to recognize and remove the poisonous plant from all grazing areas.

Palm Beach Equine Clinic's Dr. Kathleen Timmins explained that veterinarians in South Florida are suspecting Creeping Indigo cases more often and in more places than ever before. Many people are unaware of the problems this toxic plant can cause.

"Toxicity from Creeping Indigo can present itself through a number of different



symptoms, which can make it difficult to recognize and definitively diagnose," Dr. Timmins noted. "There is no test or treatment, and the damage that it causes can be irreversible. The only true treatment is limiting their exposure to it."

The most important step to avoid illness is to eradicate the plant from all pastures and grazing areas. Horse owners should walk through their property and review grass areas for the plant. Creeping Indigo is a prostrate plant that is commonly found in high traffic areas of grass, such as parking lots, turf, roadsides, medians, and overgrazed pastures. Flowers arise from the base of the leaves and are pink to salmon in color. It often grows under the grass, and when it is not flowering, it can be difficult to see. It also has a very deep root, so it is not easy to pull up.

Both neurologic and non-neurologic signs are documented, and researchers are uncertain how much Creeping Indigo a horse needs to consume before clinical signs appear.

The most notable signs are neurologic; horses may seem lethargic or have less energy than usual. Head carriage is often low, and there may be rhythmic blinking and jerking eye movements. An abnormal gait may be noticed, characterized by incoordination and weakness in all limbs.

Non-neurologic signs may include high heart and respiratory rates, high temperature, watery discharge from the eyes, discoloration of the cornea or corneal ulceration, or ulceration of the tongue and gums.

"There are so many varied symptoms that it is often not the first diagnosis you would think of," Dr. Timmins explained. "There are also many other toxic plants, but if horses have access to good quality feed or grazing, they will not usually eat the toxic plants. The best solution is to find the plant, get rid of it, and not have to find out if it has been consumed."

Horses that are quickly removed from the plants may recover completely, but there is no effective treatment, and symptoms may persist. The best way to prevent poisoning is to stop access to paddocks where Creeping Indigo is present and to remove plants by physical means or herbicide application.

Palm Beach Equine Clinic suggests that horse owners check their paddocks and grazing areas prior to use. For more information, call PBEC at 561-793-1599.

