



# PALM BEACH EQUINE CLINIC



## News, Horse Care Tips, and More From Palm Beach Equine Clinic

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### Palm Beach Equine Clinic Charges Into the Future with Advanced Imaging Technology

Palm Beach Equine Clinic (PBEC), based in Wellington, FL, takes pride in being a world-class facility for the diagnosis, treatment, and recovery of some of the world's most valued sport horses as well as backyard companions. One piece of their program that helps the veterinarians of PBEC to diagnose subtle or acute lameness is its advanced imaging department. Producing thousands of scans a year across all modalities, the PBEC imaging department consists of digital radiography, ultrasonography, nuclear scintigraphy, standing magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), and its all-new computed tomography (CT) machine.



PBEC's nuclear scintigraphy gamma ray camera. Photo by Erin Gilmore

According to PBEC President, Dr. Scott Swerdlin, the latest in diagnostic equipment drives the success of the clinic. It is his goal to have PBEC be the most advanced referral center in the country. With that goal in mind, he took a giant leap into the future by equipping his veterinarians with state-of-the-art imaging, much of which is at the peak of diagnostic technology in both animals and humans. Changing the way veterinarians approach the evaluation of lameness in horses, the equipment like the standing MRI and CT is a relatively quick and low risk method used to diagnose and treat injuries more effectively.

**"For a long time it wasn't economically viable, but I had this vision that one day it would be and we would be successfully using the latest technology. Slowly but surely we built and invested in equipment and personnel knowing that one day it would start paying off. That has happened over the last couple of years. What makes it worthwhile is knowing we are doing the very best we can for the horses and knowing we have the very best equipment for our veterinarians."** ~ PBEC President Dr. Scott Swerdlin

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Want to learn more about PBEC's computed tomography (CT) machine and how it helps diagnose lameness? Stay tuned for next month's newsletter!



Dr. Ryan Lukens. Photo by Erin Gilmore

### Meet the Team: Dr. Ryan Lukens

Dr. Ryan Lukens first connected with horses when he was growing up while mucking the 15 stalls on his family's 30-acre farm in Lebanon, OH, just north of Cincinnati. From that beginning, he went on to study veterinary medicine at The Ohio State University and earn a Certificate of Veterinary Medical Manipulation (equine specific chiropractic) at the Chi Institute in Ocala, FL.

**Q: As a fourth generation veterinarian, what led you to study equine veterinary medicine and what influence did your family have in regard to being a successful veterinarian?**

[Click to learn more about Dr. Ryan Lukens!](#)

**RL:** I often joke that I didn't have a choice and I was born to be a veterinarian. My father, my great uncle, and my great grandpa were all veterinarians. I graduated exactly 100 years after my great grandpa did from the same veterinarian school (Ohio State). My father worked exclusively on show horses in the Cincinnati area.

### Horse Healthcare Reminder: Biosecurity and Safe Travel for the Equine Sport Horse

Travel season is here! As horses are competing around the world more than ever, it is important for all owners to implement routines for vaccinations and biosecurity protocols to keep their horses healthy. Many infectious diseases are easily transmitted between horses and spread quickly through a stable or showgrounds if the proper measures are not taken. PBEC veterinarians encourage horse owners to reach out to PBEC at any time for more information or to alert doctors of a suspected potential risk.



#### What is Biosecurity?

Biosecurity is a preventative measure taken to reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases by people, animals, equipment, or vehicles. Biosecurity is important at all times, even when an outbreak has not occurred.

#### Biosecurity Tips:

- The stress of travel can weaken a horse's immune system, causing more vulnerability to disease. It is important to monitor your horse's behavior and health closely before, during, and after traveling.
  - Owners that use commercial transport for their horses should confirm that the trailers have been disinfected between each shipment.
  - Trailers should always be well ventilated, and horses should be provided with fresh, clean water at all times.
- Simple day-to-day practices in health care and hygiene are also very important in reducing the risk of contracting an infectious disease.
  - Washing hands between grooming horses and regularly cleaning grooming supplies can reduce spread of infection.
  - When attending a horse show or moving horses to a new location, a footbath for all persons entering or leaving the barn at each doorway can be effective in disinfecting shoes to reduce tracking disease into the barn.
  - Keep water buckets, feed containers, and stalls periodically disinfected, constantly clean, and reserved for single-horse use; do not share this equipment between horses.
  - Take horses' temperatures often and develop a temperature recording process to help with early detection of temperature spikes or changes.
- If horses are showing a depressed attitude, have stopped eating, are running a fever, and/or have a runny nose, contact your veterinarian immediately. Early medical attention for an infectious disease makes a large impact on the recovery of your horse and the equine community's safety.
- The best way to safeguard any horse's health is to maintain consistent vaccination and worming programs, as well as keeping the immune system strong with support from a suitable nutrition and exercise routine.

Contact your PBEC veterinarian at 561-793-1599 for more information or biosecurity measures that can ensure your horse's safety from infectious diseases.

### Vet Talk with Dr. Richard Wheeler

Note: The following is an excerpt from Dr. Wheeler's "Vet Talk" column printed in Sidelines Magazine.

**Q: My older horse is going blind. How can I help him continue to lead a happy, safe life in his barn? He knows the routine, but I can tell that losing his senses is affecting him.**

**RW:** Just as with an aging relative or pet, we have to make adjustments as our equine partners get older. One significant difference is their size and the potential safety issue this poses to both them and us. A horse with impaired vision may become anxious, and you need to be very careful and have an open discussion with your veterinarian, as well as anyone else who may be taking care of the animal. It may be useful to attach a sign on the horse's stall to remind people to be careful with the horse.



Dr. Wheeler joined PBEC in 2005 and focuses on equine sports medicine. Photo by Erin Gilmore

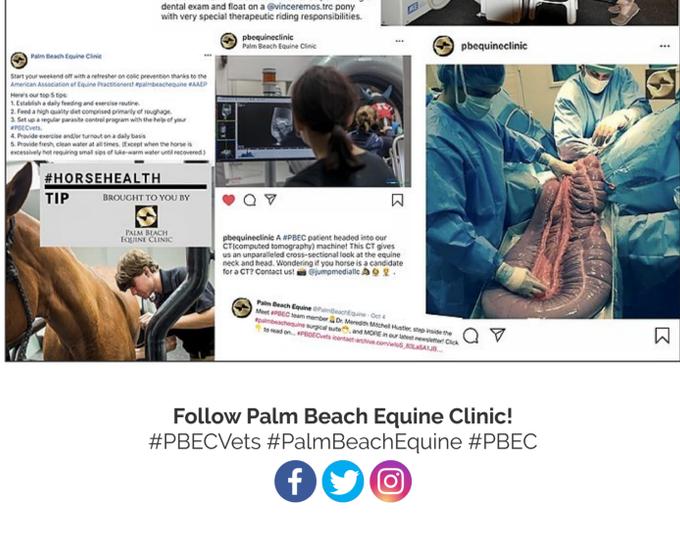
[Click here to read about all the topics covered in Dr. Wheeler's latest Vet Talk column in Sidelines!](#)

Fortunately, while there are many reasons for horses to lose sight, most are gradual processes, which allow for gradual adaptation. It has surprised me how well many horses tolerate a significant reduction in vision.

You mention the word "routine" in your question and that's very important. It will be very important to keep your horse's surroundings familiar while making sure they're as safe as possible. I would recommend removing anything that might cause injury and making sure his stall and fencing is solid, but smooth. Keeping the environment consistent is going to be important, and I believe all horses do well with a consistent daily routine. Make sure the horse has easy and consistent access to clean water and food, and check that he's drinking the required amount.

### Let's Get Social!

Here's what was happening this month on PBEC's social media channels.



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