

Links

**Newfoundland Pony Society:**

[www.newfoundlandpony.com](http://www.newfoundlandpony.com)

For more information, please contact your Regional Veterinarian, the Newfoundland Pony Society or the Animal Health Division.

Other information pamphlets are available online from the Department of Natural Resources at:

[www.nr.gov.nl.ca/agric/](http://www.nr.gov.nl.ca/agric/)

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Newfoundland  
Labrador

# Health Care of the Newfoundland Pony



## Introduction

The Newfoundland Pony has traditionally been a very hardy animal, often receiving little preventative health care. However due to the low population numbers, the optimal health of each and every pony is necessary to ensure the survival of the breed. The loss of one pony or even the loss of a single pony's breeding potential is a detriment. The loss of a number of animals due to a preventable disease would be disastrous. It is for this reason that this fact sheet and others on the care of ponies (and horses) in Newfoundland are being produced.

## Vaccinations

A vaccination program is an important part of infectious disease prevention. Vaccines increase an animal's immunity or resistance to a particular disease. When faced with exposure to an infectious agent, a vaccinated animal can mount an immune response which may avoid succumbing to the disease or reduce the severity of the disease.

The vaccine program recommended for Newfoundland Ponies, as well as other equine breeds in Newfoundland, include vaccinations against influenza, rhinopneumonitis and tetanus. Newfoundland Ponies residing outside of the Province should be vaccinated according to disease prevalence in the particular geographic location. As well as a vaccination program, farm management to reduce

exposure to infectious agents and maintain optimal general health play a major role in infectious disease prevention.

The movement of horses from different sources also increases the spread of viruses. Control measures can be implemented to reduce exposure. New entries should be isolated from the herd for a 30-day quarantine period. Also, on the larger farms, the herd can be grouped according to age and function, such as a group of mares and foals, a group of yearlings, a group of 2 year olds, etc.

## Parasite Control

Maintaining a heavy worm burden can have serious health effects. It reduces feed efficiency and increases the incidence of gastrointestinal diseases such as colic. A parasite control program involves the use of dewormers and pasture and stable management to reduce environmental exposure.

There are a number of effective dewormers available, but like many drugs, resistance does develop. The advice of your veterinarian should be sought in selecting medications that are effective against the parasite populations on your farm. There are a number of deworming schedules that can be employed - interval programs in which all ponies are dewormed every 2 months, seasonal programs in which spring and summer dewormings are strategically timed with the spring rise in parasites and the daily administration of certain brands of dewormers. The effectiveness of a deworming program can be monitored with routine fecal examinations. All horses that are housed together should be dewormed at the same time.

Environmental control should also be a component of your parasite control program. This involves frequent cleaning of stalls and pastures. The more frequent the manure removal, the better the results will be. Pastures should be rotated so that each pasture can be left vacant for a period of time to allow parasite die-off. New ponies should be kept isolated from the rest of the herd until dewormed and fecal examinations performed.

## Dental Care

Dental care is a necessary part of complete health care. Dental problems can lead to biting problems and poor feed efficiency, leading to loss of body condition or colic.

It is recommended that a dental examination be performed on Newfoundland Ponies, as well as other equines, by your veterinarian on a yearly basis. The veterinarian will detect and treat such problems as sharp enamel points, retained deciduous teeth and injuries to the teeth, cheeks or tongue. Many older ponies suffer from serious dental problems which contribute to the ultimate deterioration of the pony. Routine preventative

dental care will help prevent these problems and increase the lifespan of the pony.

## Foot Care

Preventative foot care begins at an early age with training a foal to be comfortable having his feet handled. An examination in the first week of life should be performed to detect any foot or limb abnormalities that may benefit from early corrective trimming. For the foals with normal feet and legs, regular inspection and possible trimming at 6-week to 2-month intervals will maintain healthy feet. This practice should be maintained throughout the life of the pony. Regular foot care will prevent overgrowth of the feet contributing to infections of the feet and imbalances causing joint damage and lameness.

Daily foot care involves removing manure and debris from the feet with a hoof pick. Extremely wet and muddy pastures will predispose a pony to frog infections and greasy heels. In such adverse conditions, the feet and legs should be cleaned and dried daily.

