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## ENDURANCE CHAMPION DAVID KADEN USES NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR BETTER SADDLE FIT

By Elaine Macdonald

Riding trail with your horse is one of the most satisfying experiences in the world of horses. While riding the great outdoors, your horse is expected to climb ragged, rocky hills, cross unpredictable creeks, and be versatile on most any terrain.

An average riding horse weighs about 1,000 pounds. The basic rule is that the hard working horse can easily carry 20% of his weight, or 200 pounds of rider and saddle.

However, depending on the make-up of the horse's bone structure and condition,

the horse may be able to carry up to 300 pounds on shorter pleasure rides. But what the owners need to know is how does this weight, over a period of time; affect the horse's back?

A little investigative homework is always advisable before purchasing a saddle for your horse. Buying the wrong saddle can be an expensive lesson, and may be unpleasant for the rider and/or painful for the horse.

Through today's modern technology there is help to determine a better saddle fit.

### Avoiding Back Injuries

The Force Sensor Array, or (FSA) pressure pad is a diagnostic tool used to give people a visual effect of exactly how their saddle fits the horse and how it applies pressure to the horse's back. Originally developed by Vista Medical of Ontario, Canada to study the cause of bedsores on human patients and to help devise a solution to the problem. Vista modified the pressure pad and designed a mat specifically for the horse's back.

Endurance rider David Kaden purchased a pressure pad and its computer program

as a means to help people understand accurately what degree their saddle actually fits the horse.

"The pressure pad is a problem-solving device," Kaden said. "I purchased the pressure pad program to help people understand the saddles impact on a horse's health, movement and how to keep from injuring the horse's back.

"For an accurate reading, the pressure pad is placed between the horse and saddle blanket with the rider astride the saddle," said Kaden. "The pad is attached by an electronic cable and interfaced with its computer program. The computer program indicates the hot pressure points on the horse's back, and how many pounds per square inch and where the weight is applied."

The visual effects are displayed in colors. A good reading indicates distribution of pressure throughout the saddle resulting in a uniform



color of blue on the computer screen. A poor reading would show bright red or orange pressure points.

Kaden is accomplished in the sport of endurance. His home base is located

(Continued on Page 8.)

## FROM CUTTING TO DRIVING... TEXAS STYLE COMPETITIVE DRIVING WITH TEAM TEXAS

By Ingrid Edisen

Jerry and Mike McLennan said, "I do" in 1967 and then embarked on a horse-laced adventure that has taken them to the best of the

search for the three drivers that will win a team gold medal for the US.

In November the McLennans and "Team

a cow in the 2.5 minute run of a cutting competition. We just happened to use the Quarter horses we bred and trained as we started our adventure in driving. With the exception of one horse and the five Quarter horse cross driving horses, everything we own are registered Quarter horses.

What are the caveats of the sport (driving)... for instance I've heard that if a owner handled a horse incorrectly and spoiled that horse's confidence, it was extremely difficult--if not impossible--to get that horse's confidence back (I'm talking specifically about driving). Why the blinders?

In the sport of driving, the horse must have confidence in the person attaching him to the carriage. In the event that confidence is diminished due to faulty equipment, faulty mechanics or an incapable driver, the result is almost always more catastrophic than someone falling off a horse. Once a horse has been through this experience, no amount of blinders will restore their confidence in a short period of time. Most horses are started without blinders and they are used to avoid distractions in the horse's focus during road work or in a competition. For instance, we close the blinders in dressage to keep the horse straighter and we open the blinders for the marathon so the horses can see the elements and adjust themselves without having to be told.

What are they looking for in your sport? (speed? rhythm? accuracy?)

The sport requires speed, rhythm and accuracy with rhythm being the first.



cutting, combined driving, and breeding worlds. Jerry had been raised around horses. Once Mike graduated from Baylor University and tied the knot with Jerry, he went on to work in oil and gas exploration, later to run his own company. He was a cutting horse judge for fifteen years. When on a trip to France in 1968 they were introduced to the sport of combined driving. The challenges interested them and after 25 years of competing they began to breed some of their Foundation Quarter horse mares to Friesian stallions, producing what is informally called a "Texas cob." Their Friesian/Quarter horse crosses are totally designed, bred, raised, trained, and competed by them. In 2003 and 2005 Mike, Jerry and "Team Texas" represented the U.S. in World Pairs Championships in Europe. This spring, they traveled to the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) World Equestrian Games (WEG) qualifying shows in Florida and in October competed in Lexington, Kentucky, at the first selection trial as the selection committee begins its

Texas," as a representative of the driving component--one of the seven equine disciplines competing at the WEG--will stage an exhibition as they team with the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) to promote driving and the WEG to the Quarter horse enthusiasts at the AQHA World Championship in Oklahoma City. Mike McLennan took a moment to answer some questions.

What made you switch over to driving from Quarter horses?

We did not switch from Quarter horses. We



switched to driving from cutting because the adrenal rush lasts three days rather than the 40 seconds you are working

The key ingredient is relaxation and once established, speed is

(Continued on Page 16.)

## EQUINE PIROPLASMOSIS DISEASE INVESTIGATION CONTINUES

Canada and a number of U.S. states have imposed movement restrictions or additional entry requirements for horses from Texas after equine piroplasmosis, a tick-transmitted blood disease of equine animals, such as horses, donkeys, mules and zebras, was detected in South Texas in mid-October. Equine piroplasmosis may be carried and transmitted by as many as 15 species of ticks. Although ticks have been collected from the South Texas ranch for testing, final results are not complete, and it is not known whether any of the ticks can serve as a host for the disease.

"Before moving horses from Texas, we urge you and your veterinarian to check with animal health officials for any state of destination, to ensure the animals have met all entry requirements," said Dr. Bob Hillman, Texas' state veterinarian and head of the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC), the state's livestock and poultry health regulatory agency. "Regulatory requirements can be fluid as disease situations evolve, so it is essential to call each state each time you haul." As

states provide entry restrictions and requirements, the documents are posted on the TAHC web site at <http://www.tahc.state.tx.us>. Dr. Hillman urged equine owners and veterinarians to call state animal health officials directly before hauling, as many states have not yet distributed entry requirement information. Contact information for state veterinarians may be obtained from the TAHC at 800-550-8242, ext. 710, or by emailing [ceverett@tahc.state.tx.us](mailto:ceverett@tahc.state.tx.us).

"We are continuing the equine piroplasmosis disease investigation initiated in October in South Texas. No horse movement is being allowed from or to the ranch where the infection was detected," said Dr. Hillman. "While this tick-borne disease has not been considered endemic in the U.S., cases of the disease, scientifically known as *Theileria equi*, and previously called *Babesia equi*, have been detected in the U.S. Our epidemiologists are tracing the movement of specific equine animals. Blood tests will be conducted, and the animals will be examined for ticks. Individual equine owners will be

contacted, if their horse needs to be tested by animal health officials."

Dr. Hillman refrained from speculating on how many equine animals will be tested or how many may be exposed or infected. "Until the epidemiological work and testing of potentially exposed horses is completed, there is no way to predict how many horses may be affected with this tick-borne illness," he said.

Dr. Hillman said horses infected with equine piroplasmosis may appear well, while others may exhibit a host of non-specific clinical signs, such as fever or anemia. These clinical signs also could be attributed to a variety of other diseases or causes. Blood tests are needed to diagnosis the disease.

"Equine owners should talk with their private veterinary practitioners about complying with interstate movement requirements, testing recommendations and protecting their horses from ticks. If a horse appears to be ill, it should be evaluated by an accredited private veterinary practitioner," said Dr. Hillman.

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