



2009 MEMBERSHIP EQUINE RESEARCH STUDY



2009 MEMBERSHIP EQUINE RESEARCH STUDY

GENERAL REPORT

Background

Founded in 1994, the AAEP Foundation is managed by the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP), a professional association of nearly 10,000 equine veterinarians and veterinary students worldwide. The AAEP, founded in 1954, represents a group of men and women dedicated to the health and welfare of the horse, covering a broad range of equine disciplines and breeds. Through a commitment to research, continuing education for the veterinarian and horse owner and advocacy on behalf of the horse, the AAEP and its members have directed the focus of equine veterinary medicine for more than 50 years.



A key element of the mission of the AAEP Foundation is to act as a coordinator of equine research and to serve the equine industry by defining the greatest needs in the realm of equine health throughout the United States and around the world. It is the Foundation's mission to support student scholarships, research training and research projects of priority.

In an effort to establish the needs for equine research and gather the necessary data to accomplish this portion of the mission of the Foundation, an initial online survey was conducted in 2003. A second online survey was conducted in 2009 and is presented here. The study was conducted to assess the thoughts and opinions of the AAEP membership to be used in defining and prioritizing the needs in the field of equine health research.

Both studies were distributed to all AAEP members with an active e-mail address on file with the AAEP office (approximately 87% of the licensed veterinary membership). Members were asked to complete an online survey containing both multiple choice and open-ended questions. The report was executed and tabulated through the use of an online survey service system.



RESULTS OF 2009 SURVEY

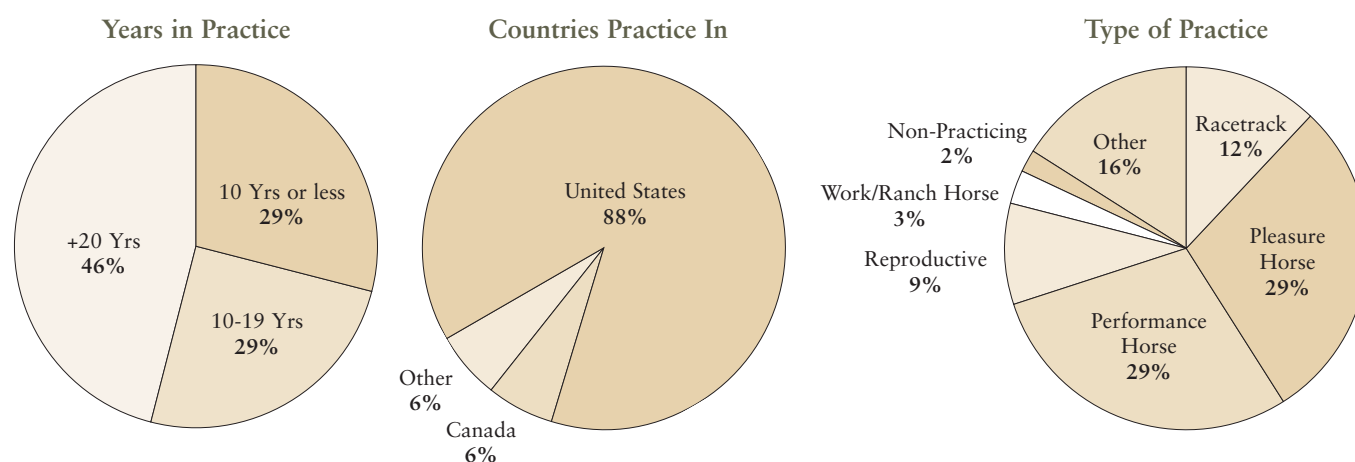
Profile of Respondents

The report was sent to 6,717 members. The number of completed surveys returned at the time of this report totaled 572.

Nearly 88% of respondents practice in the United States, with another 6% in Canada and the remaining percentage practicing in other countries.

The type of practice each member represented was primarily general, followed by practices indicating other, sport horse, pleasure horse, racetrack and reproductive, respectively.

Of the respondents, 46% indicated that they had been in practice for more than 20 years. The remaining respondents were 10-19 years (25%) and less than 10 years (29%).



Body Systems

When asked to rank the most pressing equine healthcare problem(s) they faced and wished they had answers for by body systems (ranked for highest to lowest need) in the order of importance for research needs, members ranked the musculoskeletal system highest from the choices they received: 85% of respondents ranked this system as being either extremely important or important. The body systems that followed in order of importance under the same criteria were gastrointestinal (82%), respiratory (74%), endocrine (67%) and nervous (62%).

Importance of body systems in terms of research needs	Extremely Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not at all Important
Musculoskeletal System	59%	26%	7%	8%
Gastrointestinal System	45%	37%	13%	5%
Respiratory System	31%	43%	22%	4%
Endocrine System	33%	34%	27%	6%
Nervous System	17%	45%	32%	6%
Urogenital System	9%	22%	37%	32%
Integument System	7%	24%	35%	34%
Cardiovascular System	7%	22%	44%	27%
Special Senses System	8%	14%	27%	51%

Specific Conditions Cited Most Commonly by AAEP Members

Laminitis	63%
Colic	52%
Arthritis	49%
Tendon Injuries	44%
Navicular Disease	36%
Racing Injuries	34%
Suspensory Ligament Injuries	32%
Foot Problems	31%
Osteochondritis dissecans (OCD)	28%
Rhinopneumonitis (Herpes Virus)	26%
Recurrent Lower Airway Disease	24%
Foal Pneumonia	23%

Technologies Needing More Research

Horse Side Laboratory Tests	71%
Regenerative Medicine	64%
Imaging	53%
Genetic Testing	39%
Vaccines	39%

Disease Categories

Using the same scale of importance (Priority 1-3/9), members were asked to rate disease categories relative to the need for research.

Diseases

Leading in importance were the categories of exercise-related at 51%, degenerative (49%), metabolic (43%), nutrition (25%), endocrine (39%) and trauma (26%).

Of the 10 most important diseases or disease categories that respondents felt required further research (Priority 1-3/9), laminitis had the highest return at 63%. Following were colic (52%), arthritis (49%), tendon injuries (44%), navicular disease (36%), racing injuries (34%), suspensory ligament injuries (32%), foot problems (31%), OCD (28%), rhinopneumonitis (herpes virus) (26%), recurrent lower airway disease (24%), and foal pneumonia (23%).

Technologies Needing More Research

Members were asked to rank the technologies they thought needed more research with 1 being the highest need and 7 being the lowest. Horse-side laboratory tests scored 1-3 in 71% of the times, followed by regenerative medicine (64%), imaging (53%), genetic testing (39%), vaccines (39%), tumor treatments (33%) and others (18%).

Willingness to Participate in Research

Members were willing to participate in research by recording data from specific types of case and control animals in their practice 71% of the time, and 29% were not. The preferred

method would be Web site data entry (55%), computer data base (32%) and written data record sheet (13%).



Learning about New Information from Recent Research

The majority of members (83%) said they learned from the AAEP Convention, followed by *Compendium Equine* (64%), the Journal of the AVMA (63%), the AAEP Web site or e-newsletters (62%), *Equine Veterinary Journal* (59%), *Equine Veterinary Education* (59%) and *The Horse* (55%).

A total of 69% of members also felt that the AAEP listserv and ECN listservs were good sources to learn about new research.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The results from the study indicated that the average AAEP-member veterinarian responding to the survey was a U.S. resident in general practice who has been in practice for more than 20 years. Of all available equine research, the respondents believe that more information is needed on laminitis, colic, arthritis, tendon injuries, navicular disease and racing injuries with the musculoskeletal system scoring highest overall. Suspensory ligament injuries, foot problems, OCD, rhinopneumonitis, recurrent lower airway disease and foal pneumonia also scored highly. The majority of the respondents also indicated that they were willing to serve in a data gathering and record keeping capacity in practice to enhance our database, which is particularly exciting.

With regard to learning new information from recent research, the majority of members (83%) said they learned from the AAEP Convention followed by various journals.

About half of the respondents feel that they are adequately kept abreast of ongoing research. While they indicated that e-mail communication is a valuable tool in staying abreast of new information, the overwhelming majority feels that the best source to learn of new findings is at continuing education meetings with the majority preferring the AAEP Annual Convention.

The results of this study are to be shared with partner organizations, foundations and the equine industry in general, for their use. In addition, the AAEP will forward its findings to the USDA for its use in prioritizing equine research on a national level and evaluating the necessary financial appropriations to those projects.



AAEP Foundation

Using the expertise of world-renowned equine caregivers and researchers, the AAEP Foundation is unequalled in its ability to identify the most critical health concerns facing the equine population. By working in alliance with other foundations, including the American Quarter Horse Foundation, the Morris Animal Foundation and The Grayson-Jockey Club Foundation, as well as the many other organizations, foundations, universities and research institutions worldwide, the AAEP Foundation is dedicated to research that will improve equine health. This strong coalition ensures that veterinarians, veterinary students and horse owners benefit from its work through the development of educational programs that share the best methods for the diagnosis and treatment of equine medical conditions.



To learn more about the AAEP Foundation and how it is helping horses and their caregivers, visit www.aepfoundation.org.