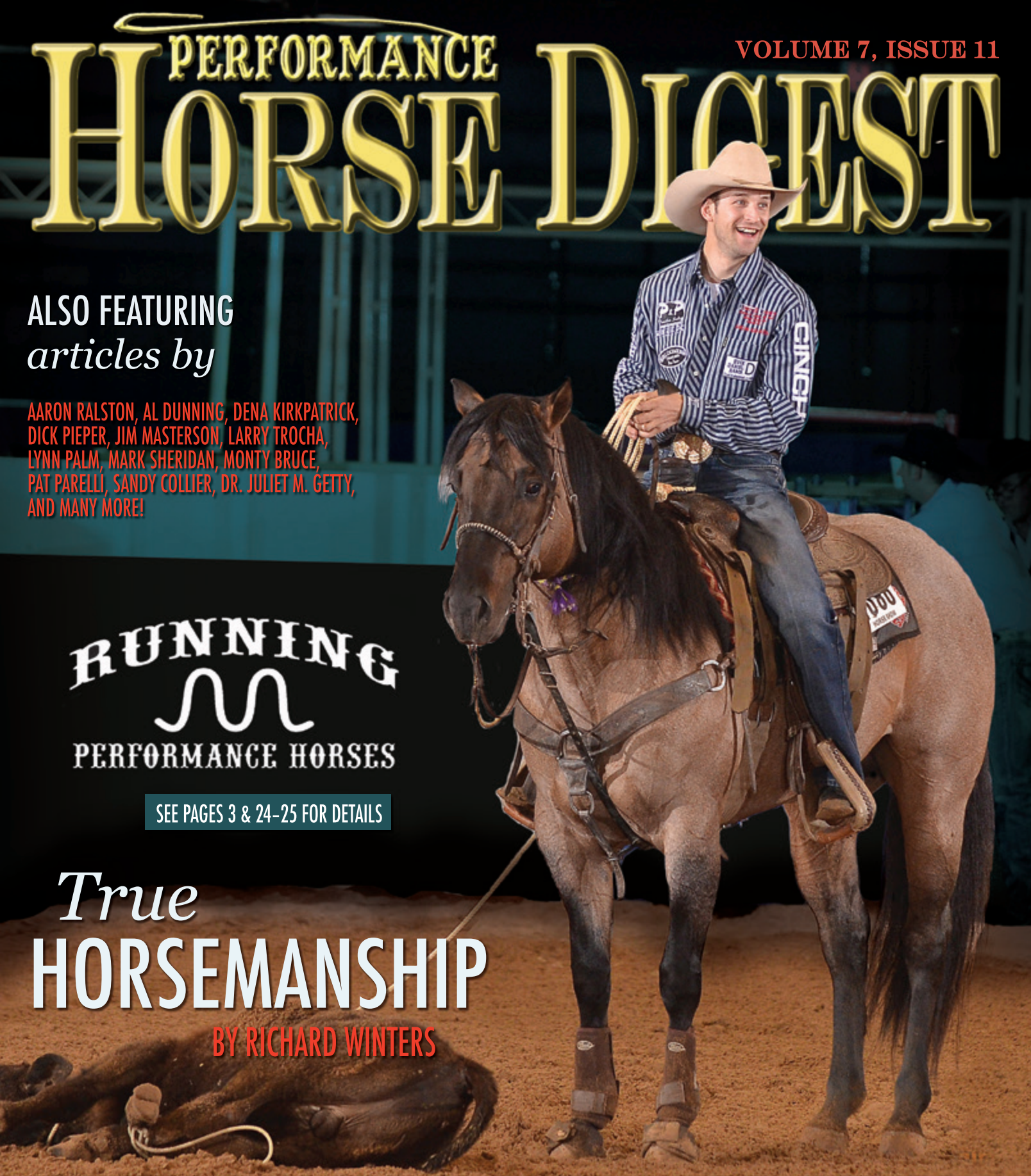
VOLUME 7, ISSUE 11

# PERFORMANCE HORSE DIGEST



## ALSO FEATURING *articles by*

AARON RALSTON, AL DUNNING, DENA KIRKPATRICK, DICK PIEPER, JIM MASTERSON, LARRY TROCHA, LYNN PALM, MARK SHERIDAN, MONTY BRUCE, PAT PARELLI, SANDY COLLIER, DR. JULIET M. GETTY, AND MANY MORE!



SEE PAGES 3 & 24–25 FOR DETAILS

## *True* HORSEMANSHIP

BY RICHARD WINTERS



**Bending at the Walk**
BY CLINTON ANDERSON

**Weaving Backward Through the Cones**
BY CRAIG CAMERON

**Drill Down**
BY BARBRA SCHULTE

**Bits & Their Purpose**
BY MARTHA JOSEY

# Head Shyness

By Jim Masterson

*When discussing head-shy horses, often the first question that is asked is whether it is a behavioral issue or a physical issue? One of the first signs that something may be a behavioral issue is that it is relatively easy it is to train through. If a behavior is unreasonably difficult to train out of the horse, or is consistent, or keeps coming back, then you might consider the possibility that it is a physical discomfort or pain issue.*

In my experience, 95% of head-shy horses have excessive pain and tension in the poll. Usually by the time it reaches the point of head-shyness, it's extreme. There are things you can do to help the horse release this tension, but you also want to determine what's creating it in the first place so that you can prevent it from returning.

There's a long list of possible causes for physical discomfort or pain in your horse's poll. The most obvious would be a trauma from an outside source, for example, rearing up and hitting the head in the trailer or on a beam. Other possibilities might be ear-twitching, or hard-tying a horse that pulls back. By the time the horse learns that pulling back isn't going to work often the damage is done – especially if the horse is strong-willed or panics. This doesn't necessarily mean that it's permanent and can't be undone, but tension in this area doesn't easily let go on its own. In fact the horse does a lot better job of covering it up than letting it go.

There's also the likelihood that pain in this area is being created by physical issues elsewhere in the horse. Virtually any discomfort will affect the poll. Sore front feet and dental problems are two common causes of pain in the poll. If the horse has a sore foot or feet, he also may be girthy, or react to palpation at the pectoral muscle under the girth line on the side as the sore foot, and will be more head-shy on that side.

Dental issues will also create pain in the TMJ, which radiates into the poll. A saddle pinching a sore back behind the withers can create pain on the top of the poll, as the horse tenses along the topline to get away from

the saddle. Even sore hocks will create tension in the hamstrings, which pull on the sacrum, which creates tension in the atlas (first vertebra of the neck, behind the poll).

If your horse is head-shy there's a good chance that it might be a physical discomfort, and not a training issue. Simple body work techniques can help to release this discomfort. The Bladder Meridian, and Lateral Cervical Flexion Techniques are easy to use, and can both be found at www.mastersonmethod.com/training-videos.

The Bladder Meridian Technique bypasses the horse's survival-defense response and connects directly with that part of the horse's nervous system that releases tension. The Lateral Cervical Flexion Technique also releases tension and restores movement to the poll and atlas. Releasing tension in this area can be one of the most rewarding things you can do for your horse.

Jim Masterson has been the equine bodywork therapist for the 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2012 USEF Endurance Teams, and has worked on thousands of horses, including equine athletes competing in FEI World Cup, Pan American and World Equestrian Games competitions. He is the author of the book and DVD Beyond Horse Massage, and the DVDs Equine Massage For Performance Horses and Dressage Movements Revealed. Go to www.mastersonmethod.com for more information.

# Reduce STORAGE LOSSES of ROUND BALES



*Hay waste can occur during both storage and feeding. Research has shown outdoor hay storage losses of round bales can range from 5 to 35% depending on precipitation, storage site, and original condition of the bale. For example, the outer 4" layer of a 6' diameter round bale contains about 25% of the total bale volume, and is most likely to be damaged by weather if stored improperly or unprotected.*

There are a number of techniques that minimize outdoor storage losses of round bales:

Bale (or buy) a dense bale as the bales will sag less and have less surface area in contact with the ground. Use plastic wrap, net wrap, or plastic twine. Research has shown that net wrapped bales reduced grass hay dry matter losses by 32% compared with twine bales when stored outside.

Store bales on a well drained surface. A well drained, 4 to 6" coarse rock base will minimize bottom spoilage, as well as using wood pallets.

Never store round bales under trees. Store round bales end to end when storing outside. Position round bales as tightly as possible in long lines on a well drained site. If more than one line of bales is needed, space adjacent lines at least 3' apart. This will increase air flow and allow sunlight to penetrate the bales. In a South Dakota study, dry matter losses of round bales were 4% for round bales stacked individually and less than 1% for round bales stacked end to end.

When storing round bales outside without cover, never stack round bales in a pyramid. Stacking tends to trap moisture and limits drying action from sunlight and wind. A South Dakota study reported dry matter losses of round bales stacked in pyramids at more than 10% after one year of storage.

Storage losses are usually reduced by approximately two thirds with indoor storage and by one half with good plastic covering (i.e. a tarp) outdoors.

*Author: Krishona Marnson, PhD, University of Minnesota.*