

TESTING MANURE FOR OIL OR SAND CONTENT

by Dr. Laura Harris

Determining oil content in a manure sample is usually done 18 to 24 hours after administration of mineral oil to a colic case. This determination tells us whether the mineral oil has passed through the entire length of the horse's intestinal tract.

- 1) Visually inspect the manure to see if it is shiny or oily on the surface
-- this can be deceiving so be sure to follow with step #2
- 2) Put several manure balls (5 or 6) in a one gallon Ziplock type bag. Add 2 cups of water. Seal and shake the bag until the manure balls "dissolve". Allow the bag to sit upright and undisturbed for an hour. The mineral oil will rise to the surface of the water.

Determining sand content in a horse's manure can be used to check the success of a sand removal program on a previously diagnosed horse (sand colic) or to assess the effectiveness of your prevention program. Samples should be checked on three consecutive days using manure balls from the top of the pile (have not touched the ground).

- 1) Visually inspect the manure – break open the manure balls and look for sand or gravel particles
- 2) While wearing thin latex type gloves rub the manure between your fingertips and see if it feels "gritty".
- 3) Put several manure balls (5 or 6) in a gallon size Ziplock bag, add 2 cups water, seal and shake until the manure balls "dissolve". Let the bag sit upright and sealed without being disturbed for an hour – any sand in the tested manure will sink to the bottom. Repeat this test three days in a row.