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Japan's Nuclear Troubles : What is Radiation's Effect on Horses?

March 11 Tsunami - How are the horses doing in Japan?

A week after the major earthquake and tsunami struck Japan, some information is emerging about the plight of equines and other animals in areas that took the brunt of the tsunami, as well as the earthquake and after shocks that have followed. Although several equine training facilities and clubs have managed to move their equines to safety, others were submerged by the tsunami, and a number of horses have been reported as missing or dead.

The Equestrian Federation of Japan has over 6000 members with 3000 registered horses making it likely that some of its members have been affected. The Souma City, Fukushima Prefecture region, which was devastated by the Earthquake and Tsunami, has been famed for its horse breeding for over 1000 years and it is possible that some horses here were killed or injured during the disaster. Most Japanese horses seem to have escaped the brunt of the massive earthquake and tsunami that devastated Japan on March 11, though the full impact of this disaster on Japan's equine industry is still unclear.

Little news is forthcoming, but what we do know is that the Japan Racing Association cancelled all races at Nakayama Racecourse till April 17. The National Association of Racing racetrack Mizusawa, located near the epicentre of the earthquake, cancelled its entire racing schedule for 2011.

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The current emission of radioactivity from the damaged nuclear plants is of major concern because it affects equines near the plants, but feed may also be tainted by radioactive particles.

Several [equestrian](#)-related groups throughout the world have started fundraisers for horses and other animals in Japan. Information is posted on Face Book and other internet sites for those who want to help support equines and other animals affected by the devastating earthquake and tsunami.

The JEF have announced shortages in feed, bedding and rugs. Many of the riding clubs are helping each other to provide shelter and feed for the horses from the affected areas and EA Chairman Paul Cargill has advised that Australia will provide any assistance necessary.

To read more about the possible radiation effects on horses, follow the link below to the article on our Equus website: <http://www.equusfeeds.co.za/articles.html#japan>



Travel Sickness can be Life Threatening!

Traveling can be very stressful for horses and the major risk involved in transporting horses over long distances is that of travel sickness. If a horse suffers from travel sickness, and is left untreated, complications may arise and your horse could die!

Competitions countrywide are already in full swing and to learn more about travel sickness and ways to minimize your risk we suggest you follow the link:

[A Guide to Safe Towing](http://www.cyberhorse.net.au/safetowing/travelsickness.htm) (<http://www.cyberhorse.net.au/safetowing/travelsickness.htm>)

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Anytime's story

I bought the little 15.2 Thoroughbred gelding called Anywhere Anytime in August of 2007 after initially not wanting him but after having my arm twisted by his racing owner's wife, I gave in. Contrary to all my misgivings, I soon realised that he had an incredible temperament and I fell in love with him. In April 2008, however, disaster struck. Anytime fell extremely ill, went down in his stable and could not get up.

The vet felt there was a strong possibility that it was West Nile Virus – a disease not well known in South Africa but one from which very few horses have survived before and which seems to have become more prevalent in the last few years.

Anytime was totally paralysed in his back legs but seemed in good spirits and was still eating, despite lying on his side. After two nights of staying with him around the clock, turning him over every hour and hand-feeding him, we had to make a very difficult decision.

At this stage we were all exhausted and could hardly think straight. As his prognosis was so bleak with only a 2% chance of survival, I felt it best to put him out of his misery but my dear husband convinced me to give the horse a chance. On a Thursday afternoon, the vet sedated him and we literally dragged him into the horsebox with the help of every single soul at the stables.



At Onderstepoort the vets weren't very positive about his chances of survival to start with and gave only a 20% chance that he would be ridden again if he survived, but because of the fact that he seemed to understand what was happening and gave his co-operation as much as possible, we were told to give him until Saturday. He was down for another two nights – too weak to stand even with the help of a sling. All attempts to get him to stand in the sling failed but he never once struggled against the sling. As Saturday approached our hearts felt heavier and heavier. On the Saturday morning, however, he waited for the sling to start lifting him, put his legs under him and finally managed to stand for a few minutes. A week later we brought him home and on his discharge sheet his vet wrote that he was truly a "Miracle Horse".

At home his slow recuperation started. He was covered in sores from dehydration and had to receive handfuls of medicine every few hours. We diligently doctored the sores and walked him slowly to strengthen his muscles. Six months later everyone was in tears when he was ridden again for the first time.

Today he has made a full recovery and has started competing again – his latest achievements being wins at dressage and showing shows, a Reserve Championship at Pretoria Show and the Gauteng North Show Hack Championship.