**SPLINT BONE REMOVAL PRE OPERATIVE PROCEDURE**

**Step 1**: Diagnosis via:

1. Clinical Examination - Most splint bone fractures will result in some degree of lameness which is evident during clinical examination. Swelling and pain associated with the fracture site is usually present. In severe cases of open fracture, bone fragments within the wound may be visible to the naked eye.
2. Radiographic Examination
3. Ultrasonographic Examination – Associated soft tissue damage is better assessed via this method.  Although the ultrasound waves cannot penetrate the bone structure, a very detailed picture of the bone surface is visible, thereby allowing for quick and accurate diagnosis.

**Step 2:** Most preoperative preparative work is conducted with the horse standing, so that time spent under general anesthesia is minimized. The surgical site is clipped to prevent hair contamination of the incision during the procedure. Contact time between the scrub (bactericidal soap) and skin surface is maximized by applying the first layer early. This reduces the chance for postoperative infection. The skin and subcutaneous tissues along the incision site are locally anesthetized using the **High Palmar Nerve Block (High Four Point Block).** This allows the surgery to be performed using less general anesthetics, which is healthier and safer for the horse. Moreover, local anesthesia allows for preoperative "marking" of the underlying bone fragments.

**Step 3**: While the scrub and local anaesthetic are working, an intravenous catheter is placed to allow for easy and immediate access to the horse's vascular (systemic) system during surgery. The catheter is always placed on the same side as the limb containing the fracture(s); that way it will be facing upward during the horse's recovery. Skin staples are placed in the skin and spaced along the length of the fractured splint bone. These staples can be used to ascertain the specific location of each fragment along the length of the limb through follow-up radiographic examination. Once the exact position of each fragment has been determined, the horse is placed under general anesthesia and the limb is further prepped and draped.