

## **CHALLENGES TO MANAGING EQUINE COLIC**

Today's economy is challenging to horse owners, often limiting their access to the best veterinary treatment. An owner's decision on how to handle a colicking horse is often based on financial constraints rather than medical limitations. In a strong economy, reports Mueller, "for every 10 horse owners faced with colic surgery, eight or nine agree to surgery. During the recent economic downturn this has decreased to four or five of every 10 horse owners agreeing to colic surgery when needed, with the rest opting for humane euthanasia because of financial considerations."

Freeman points out, "Now more than ever, it is important that practitioners are sensitive to (financial constraints) by being selective about expensive postoperative treatments and keeping costs of care within a range that an owner can afford."

Again, timely referral is key: The sooner a horse is referred, the less expensive the owner's bill will be. Unfortunately, more owners are taking the opposite "wait-and-see" approach because of veterinary expenses.