

THE SIX 'F'S IN 'BIT'

A metal bit in the sensitive mouth of a horse frequently causes intense and sudden pain. It also frequently causes deep and prolonged pain. Unlike some animals when hurt, horses do not scream. Instead they exhibit evidence of pain by changes in body language. If we learn to interpret that language we discover that both acute and chronic pain is expressed in six major categories; fear, flight, fight, freeze, facial neuralgia and physiological confusion. Collectively, there are over 100 different behavioral problems or clinical symptoms that are subsets of one or more of the six F's. These problems are all too familiar to horsemen, though the bit has not previously been recognized as being their common and, in many cases, their exclusive cause. They include, for example, roaring, thickness of wind, tongue-over-the-bit, dorsal displacement of the soft palate (DDSP), epiglottal entrapment, asphyxia-induced pulmonary edema ('bleeding,' aka EIPH), the headshaking syndrome, head tilt, heavy-headedness, high headedness, chomping, pulling, sore mouth, bucking, rearing, bolting, lugging-out, leaning-in, stumbling, premature fatigue, breakdowns and that catch-all syndrome, 'poor performance.' The evidence for these statements can be found online by clicking on 'Articles' at www.bitlessbridle.com.