



Walking on Wire: A PBEC Success Story

In February of 2021, Baby Girl Horse Rescue and Veteran Therapy Ranch in Fellsmere, FL, rescued six Belgian Draft Horses that were headed for slaughter after a life of neglect. Ezekiel, known as "Zeke," was one of the gentle giants that rescue organizer Van DeMars described as still having spirit in his eyes despite his desperate condition. "When I found out about Zeke, I insisted on buying him even if it was only to give him some care and then have to put him down humanely," DeMars reflected. "I just did not want him to have to make the long, hard trip past the border to die a scary death."



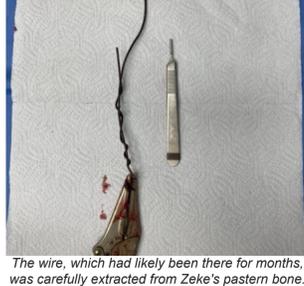
The radiograph confirmed a metal object was circumferentially wrapped around Zeke's mid-pastern bone. Photo courtesy of PBEC



Zeke was suffering from a severely swollen, actively infected, and draining wound on his left front leg. Photo courtesy of PBEC

Zeke was suffering from a severely swollen, actively infected, and draining wound on his left front leg. He was lame at the walk and in evident pain and discomfort. Once Zeke arrived at the rescue, their veterinarian Dr. Karie Vander Werf took radiographs that painted a grim picture. The radiographs showed a metal wire had been wrapped around Zeke's pastern bone, deeply embedded through the soft tissue and into the bone. She then immediately referred Zeke to board-certified surgeon [Dr. Weston Davis](#) for surgery at Palm Beach Equine Clinic.

Once Zeke arrived at Palm Beach Equine Clinic, Dr. Weston Davis, assisted by [Dr. Sidney Chanutin](#), took additional radiographs to thoroughly assess the location and depth of the wire. "The radiographs confirmed a metal object was circumferentially wrapped around the mid-pastern bone, embedded into the soft tissue and remodeled the bone itself," Dr. Chanutin revealed. On February 24, Zeke was put under standing sedation, given a local nerve block, and the wire was carefully extracted by Dr. Davis.



The wire, which had likely been there for months, was carefully extracted from Zeke's pastern bone. Photo courtesy of PBEC

"Had the wire not been removed when it was, the infection would have continued to proliferate," said Dr. Chanutin. "The infection and invasion of the wire into the soft tissue and pastern bone could have potentially cut Zeke's life short."

While neither the rescue nor the veterinarians could tell with certainty how this had happened to Zeke, it was apparent by the location and way the wire was twisted that it was likely placed there intentionally. It was clear the wire had been embedded into Zeke's pastern for months, based on the level of bone remodeling that had taken place.

Reflecting on how he felt dropping Zeke off for surgery, DeMars said, "I was afraid but was very confident in Dr. Davis. I knew that if anyone could get that wire out and give Zeke a chance to have a normal life, it would be him. Later that evening, I got a text of a picture of the wire and I was in shock that they had already gotten it out so fast. I was elated beyond belief."



Zeke recovered at Dr. Vander Werf's farm, where he fell much more comfortable and even broke into the feed room on occasion. Photo courtesy of Baby Girl Horse Rescue and Veteran Therapy Ranch

Remarkably, Zeke's stay at the Palm Beach Equine Clinic hospital was less than 48 hours. He was then transferred to Dr. Vander Werf's farm for aftercare, which included daily bandage changes, antibiotics, and wound care.

It only took a few weeks post-surgery for Zeke to finally experience pain-free days at Dr. Vander Werf's facility. "He's been a sweet boy through all of this, but only a day or two after the surgery, we really got to see his personality," DeMars said. "He's just a mischievous boy who even busted into Dr. Vander Werf's feed room and is best friends with a little mini pony. We know he must have been in intense pain because he has become a completely different horse now."

In early April, Zeke was able to arrive at his new home of Baby Girl Horse Rescue and Veteran Therapy Ranch. The group of Belgian Draft Horses rescued alongside Zeke have come to be known as the "Titans." They are destined to be part of the Titan Project, an endeavor to provide equine assisted therapy for veterans and first responders suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and other related issues.



Photos courtesy of Baby Girl Horse Rescue and Veteran Therapy Ranch

"Zeke is quite famous now, especially among the veterans," explained DeMars. "People who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder are able to derive strength through Zeke's story and many have been reaching out through social media asking when he's coming home so they can come see him. So, his future job is just to be groomed and taken care of. He's going into retirement to be spoiled."

The veterinary team at Palm Beach Equine Clinic is dedicated to protecting and providing the best possible outcome for every patient. Through swift action by the rescue and expert veterinary and surgical care, Zeke now has a new purpose and will live out his days in a safe, healthy environment. In the wake of Zeke's immense suffering, he is now miraculously on the path to paying it forward by providing veterans and first responders the relief and support they need.

Visit [Baby Girl Horse Rescue on Facebook](#) for more information or to support Zeke with a donation.

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PBEC in the News

Understanding the Equine Neck

Dressage Today



Photo by Jump Media

Traditionally, when a horse's gait feels off or lacks its usual impulsion, it is often assumed to be an issue of lameness. That, however, is not always the case. Thanks to improved diagnostic imaging tools and techniques now readily available to veterinarians, they are able to more accurately pinpoint problem areas that produce a decline in performance. Perhaps not so surprisingly, it's not always in the legs or hooves that are the sites of the problem. With increasing frequency, the neck is being diagnosed as the root of common lameness, soreness, and performance issues.

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The Equine Joint File: The What, Why, Who, When, and How of Supplementing Horse Joints with Nutrition

Platinum Performance Magazine

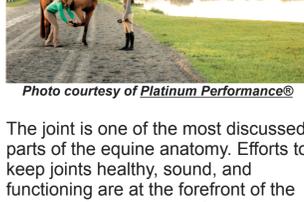


Photo courtesy of Platinum Performance®

The joint is one of the most discussed parts of the equine anatomy. Efforts to keep joints healthy, sound, and functioning are at the forefront of the care and management of every horse. "I have noticed as a veterinarian that the horses receiving a proper dose of a joint supplement, like Platinum CJ, tend to require less frequent veterinary joint intervention when compared to other horses of similar age, training level, and type of athletic competition," said Dr. Marilyn Connor, DVM.

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PBEC Events Continue in Wellington

The Winter Equestrian Festival may be over, but horse show's still going at full speed in Wellington during the ESP Super Series, featuring several classes sponsored by Palm Beach Equine Clinic. Events can be streamed live or on demand [here](#).



Geoffrey Hesslink and Small Occasion, pictured with Dr. Tyler Davis, won the \$10,000 National Hunter Derby, sponsored by Palm Beach Equine Clinic. Photo by Sportfot

On Friday, April 23, Geoffrey Hesslink and Small Occasion, owned by Shadowfax Equestrian, LLC, captured the win in the \$10,000 USHJA National Hunter Derby, sponsored by Palm Beach Equine Clinic. The pair earned a total score of 185.5 across the two rounds to take the win.

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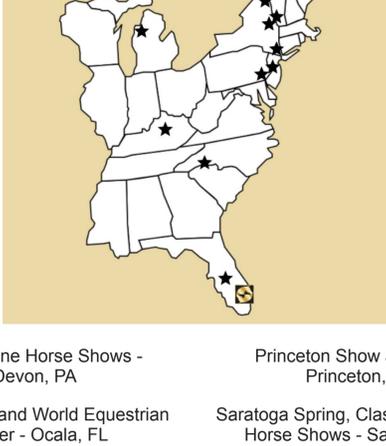
Wilton Porter and Diamonte Darco captured the \$37,000 Palm Beach Equine Clinic 1.45m Qualifier CSI2* during WEF 4. Photo by Sportfot

On Sunday, May 9, the \$25,000 Palm Beach Equine Clinic Spring 4 Grand Prix will take place on the derby field at Equestrian Village following the Medium Amateur/Owner Jumper Classic.

[See ESP Spring 4 Schedule](#)

Where in the World is Palm Beach Equine Clinic?

Now that the winter competition season has come to a close in Wellington, FL, several of our vets are hitting the road to travel or return home, offering their services nationwide. Find out where some of our satellite veterinarians are based throughout the spring and summer.



Brandywine Horse Shows -
Devon, PA

Princeton Show Jumping -
Princeton, NJ

HITS Ocala and World Equestrian
Center - Ocala, FL

Saratoga Springs - Saratoga & Summer
Horse Shows - Saratoga, NY

Kentucky Spring & Summer Horse
Shows - Lexington, KY

Traverse City Horse Shows, Great
Lakes Equestrian Festival, and Major
League Show Jumping -
Williamsburg, MI

Keeneland Spring Meet -
Lexington, KY

Tryon International Equestrian
Center - Tryon, NC

Lake Placid Horse Show -
Lake Placid, NY

Vermont Summer Festival -
East Dorset, VT

Old Salem Spring & Summer Horse
Shows - North Salem, NY



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