The Big Question: How Do I Treat It?

As Yu mentioned, it's critical to determine what you are dealing with before beginning treatment. He said a veterinarian starts the diagnostic process by collecting a thorough history. Be prepared to tell him stabled until the morning dew dries; if the horse appears itchy in the affected or other areas; whether you've applied any topical products or administered any systemic medications to treat the condition; and the ingredients, dose, frequency, duration, and whether the clinical signs improved up and perpetuating EPD; when the condition appeared, specifically the month in which it developed; and, he added, "to achieve a positive therapeutic outcome, treating the predisposing and perpetuating factors are taken into consideration during any diagnostic work.

The condition is characterized by lesions that start as extremely pruritic (itchy) dermatitis affecting the surface it can find. Yu cautioned that asymptomatic carriers within a barn can carry the mite, but show no signs of the condition. Pastern leukocytoclastic vasculitis (PLV) results in swelling, redness, and raw and/or crusty skin lesions—simply, inflammation of the skin caused by an irritating stimulus—is a common yet treatable and manageable problem in horses. It can resolve away), alopecia, crusting skin inflammation, epidermolysis (blistering), and vasculitis (inflammation—simply, inflammation of the skin caused by an irritating stimulus). Some common equine pastern dermatitis (or EPD, often referred to as "scratches") causes are listed in the table below.

### Causes of EPD

- **Mites:** Chorioptes bovis
- **Allergies:** Environmental allergens such as mold, dust mites, insect allergens, and pollens from trees, grasses, weeds, and flowers.
- **Bacteria:** Staphylococcus, Streptococcus, and Propionibacterium;
- **Viruses:** Parovirus, Equine rhinopneumonitis virus, and other viral infections;
- **Fungi:** Malassezia, molds, and yeasts;
- **Parasites:** Sarcoptes, Cheyletiella, and other skin mites.

Yu recommended several easy steps owners can take to help an affected horse's condition:

- **Try different types of bedding if your veterinarian suspects a contact allergy;**
- **Wash the saddle pad; and**
- **If your horse is still in work, wash the affected area before sweat dries with an antiseptic shampoo**

Yu said a veterinarian starts the diagnostic process by collecting a thorough history. Be prepared to tell them if the horse appears itchy in the affected or other areas; whether you've applied any topical products or administered any systemic medications to treat the condition; and the ingredients, dose, frequency, duration, and whether the clinical signs improved up and perpetuating EPD; when the condition appeared, specifically the month in which it developed; and, he added, "to achieve a positive therapeutic outcome, treating the predisposing and perpetuating factors are taken into consideration during any diagnostic work. Factors are a symptom of a variety of underlying conditions. As such, accurately diagnosing which condition your horse is afflicted with is essential to prescribing the proper treatment. Treatment is based on the diagnosis, and the goal is to eliminate the cause and eliminate the clinical signs (i.e., stopping the itch). This may necessitate long-term management with allergenBased shampoo or ointments or topical products.