**Nerves of Distal Forelimb**

Understanding the distribution of the nerves is important in lameness diagnosis using nerve blocks. Once this can be quickly done, placing the nerve blocks and knowing which structures they block will be easier to understand.

**Radial nerve** does not extend past the carpus as it does in the other domestic species.

**Median, ulnar & medial cutaneous antebrachial** (a branch of the musculocutaneous) **nerves:** 3 nerves passing the carpus in the horse.

**Median nerve:** bifurcates into the medial and lateral branches proximal to the carpus.

**Ulnar nerve:** bifurcates just proximal to the carpus into dorsal and palmar branches.

**Dorsal branch of the ulnar nerve:** wraps around the cannon bone and descends on the dorsolateral side of the cannon region to the fetlock.

**Palmar branch of the ulnar nerve:** joins with the lateral branch of the median nerve to form the lateral palmar nerve.

**Median and lateral palmar nerves:** travel down either side of the flexor tendons. At the level of the fetlock, they give off a dorsal branch and continue as the palmar digital nerves. The median palmar nerve consists of only median fibers. The lateral palmar nerve has both ulnar and median nerve fibers.

**Communicating branch:** crosses over the palmar aspect of the flexor tendons about halfway down the metacarpus, where it is palpable. It carries fibers from the medial palmar nerve (median nerve fibers) to the lateral palmar nerve (ulnar and median nerve).

**Medial and lateral palmar digital nerves:** pass distally on the palmar aspect of the digit to innervate the heel of the foot. They form a triad along with the digital vein and artery on each side. These triads are arranged vein, artery and nerve from dorsal to palmar/ plantar.

**Dorsal branches of the digital nerves:** pass distally for a short distance with the palmar/ plantar digital nerves and then pass dorsally to innervate the toe region of the foot. The relationship between the digital nerves and their dorsal branches is important when blocking only one of the two.

**Deep branch of the lateral palmar nerve (ulnar nerve):** arises at the carpus from the lateral palmar nerve, dives deep and branches into the palmar metacarpal nerves.

**Palmar metacarpal nerves:** continuation of the deep branch of the lateral palmar nerve. They course distally in the junctions between the splint bones and the cannon bone deep to the suspensory ligament. They pass under the buttons of the splints to become superficial and continue to the fetlock.

**Medial cutaneous antebrachial nerve:** the cutaneous continuation of the musculocutaneous nerve. It extends distally to the fetlock.

