A complete history is an important aspect in the diagnosis of equine colic. Information should include the animal’s diet, environment, deworming history, current workload and previous medical history. The more specific questions concerning this particular colic should incorporate the duration of the colic, last time the animal was fed, any recent changes in the feed or work level, if the animal experienced a recent trauma, if there a chance that the animal has ingested a foreign body, and if the animal is pregnant. A history of being off feed for a few days, decreased fecal output, and exhibiting mild abdominal pain would lead your veterinarian in the diagnosis of a simple obstruction. A history of an acute onset of severe, violent pain with rolling and pawing would lead to a diagnosis of a more serious problem such as an intestinal strangulating obstruction.

Farms that have colic as a more frequent problem have certain risk factors that need to be evaluated. Some of the factors include the following: inadequate parasite control, moldy hay or grain, inadequate roughage availability, sandy soil for horses fed on the ground, lack of water, and lack of stable help to keep the horses on a set feeding and watering schedule.