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Sommario/riassunto

"Determining underlying causes for sudden or unexplained equine deaths has significant medicolegal importance. Potentially all horses are at risk, but horses are less commonly intoxicated than other species due to more selective dietary habits, more controlled environments, and more observant owners. Clues that might point towards an intoxication include sudden death of one or more otherwise healthy horses, recent feed or environmental changes, easy access to chemical storage areas or trash piles, access to areas with potentially toxic plants, or threats of poisoning. Malicious poisoning does occur due to disputes or in situations in which animals are insured or involved in some form of competition. Determining the cause and manner of death is critical to substantiating claims and the ultimate liability of insurers. A systematic and thorough postmortem examination is essential to confirm death caused by toxicant exposure. Documentation (e.g., use of chain-of-custody procedures) of proper sample collection, storage, and laboratory submission is crucial, especially with accidental feed contamination or malicious poisoning suspicions"--