

ISSUE 3 Autumn 2019

# Equine NEWS

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VETERINARY GROUP



**Equine**

COMPASSION, CARE AND CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

Welcome to our new look newsletter. We will continue to publish our equine newsletters quarterly but they will now contain more clinical content and practice updates.

Our Autumn cover star is Teddy owned by Angela Tyson. This picture was taken whilst Teddy was taking part in a school fundraiser.

Please email [equine@paragonvet.com](mailto:equine@paragonvet.com) if you have any topic suggestions for either the newsletter or Facebook page.

## **STAFF NEWS**

Since the last newsletter we have had a few staff changes. Rob has moved on to a new job at Oakhill Veterinary Centre, we wish him all the best for the future and thank him for his contribution during his time working with us.

We are happy to announce that Sarah Hogg is back with us part time, she will generally be working Mondays, Tuesdays and every other Wednesday as well as taking a share of the on call rota. Sarah's specialities are dentals and acupuncture so give her a call if you would like more information.



Euan Hammersley will be joining us from the 4th November to work full time as a vet within the equine team. He graduated in 2017 from Glasgow University and has previously been working for Alnorthumbria Veterinary Group. He is currently working towards his certificate in advanced veterinary practice. He enjoys all aspects of first opinion work and has a particular interest in lameness and breeding work. Outside of work he is a keen eventer and enjoys skiing in the winter.

## **OUT OF HOURS**

Just to remind everyone that we now offer full out of hours equine only veterinary cover.

To speak to the equine vet on duty please call either Newbiggin on 017684 83789 or Dalston on 01228 710208 and select option 3.

## CLIENT EVENINGS

We hope that you will be able to join us for the following events

### **TUESDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER**

**To be held at Paragon Veterinary Group, Dalston**

Discussing 'health care for older horses'

We will cover all aspects of health care in older horses, ponies and donkeys, discussing how their requirements change as they get older and what we can do to help keep them happy and comfortable in their senior years. There will be plenty of opportunity for questions and to have a chat about your own horses with the equine team.



### **FRIDAY 18TH OCTOBER**

**To be held at Newbiggin Village Hall, Newbiggin**



Discussing 'gastric ulcers syndrome (EGUS) and colic'

Presentations will cover the causes, diagnosis, treatment and management of both EGUS and colic. Sarah Rushby from Saracen horse feeds will also be in attendance to chat about what their feeds can do nutritionally for both conditions.

Both evenings are free of charge and are open to everyone.

Refreshments of tea/ coffee and cake/ biscuits will be served at both events.

If you would be interested in attending please give us a call on 017684 83789/ 01228 710208 or email [equine@paragonvet.com](mailto:equine@paragonvet.com) so that we have an idea of numbers for catering.

**SARCOIDS AND MELANOMAS****Paul May - MRCVS BVMS**

Although these are very different conditions of the equine skin, they are often approached in the same manner. Both tend to be left to see how they develop but our advice is to treat much sooner, before they become really established, or spread to other sites in the body.

Melanomas tend to be thought of as a problem for greys, but they can also be found, less commonly, in horses of other colours. They can be found at many sites around the body but are most frequently found on the head and under the tail. It is safe to assume that most grey horses with black skin will develop melanomas by the time they reach 20 years of age.

Melanomas usually develop slowly and can appear to stay the same size to many owners who are seeing them every day. They can, however, grow more rapidly and spread to internal organs, although in many cases the spread does not cause health issues detectable to the clinician.



The dark areas are melanomas within the guttural pouch

Recent changes in treatment have shown that if they are treated aggressively, early on in their development, they can be effectively controlled at external sites. Where there is sufficient skin they can be removed surgically or cryosurgically, but great advances have been made in laser surgery allowing control of the very small melanomas without having to surgically remove them at all sites. Also, there are specific drugs that can be injected into the tumours and can be particularly effective in reducing the size. One of the most frequent sites for melanomas to develop is under the tail where there is very little spare skin, so early treatment here is very important. These tumours first appear as small plaques or nodules and gradually increase in size until they can obstruct the anus and cause colic through impaction of faeces.

Sarcoids in horses present a much more complex picture. Like melanomas, they primarily affect the skin and can appear in a variety of forms. In this short article we can only just touch on the facts but greater depth can be found on websites such as the University of Liverpool sarcoid fact sheet.



There are a few stand out features that can be drawn from such sites:

- Sarcoids can occur in horses of all types and breeds( for example donkeys and zebras), all colours and both sexes. Horses in all parts of the world are affected.
- Sarcoids should be a form of skin cancer, not a wart
- The commonest sites for sarcoids to be found are those areas with thin skin, little or no hair cover and a tendency to sweat
- There are 6 different types of sarcoid so don't be misled by the appearance of a lump
- An individual horse may have one lesion or may have up to several thousand sarcoids



A few cases heal spontaneously with complete disappearance of the lesions, usually as younger horses, but unfortunately most horses will go on to produce numerous sarcoids. It is assumed that there is a susceptibility to developing them in an individual and that may be inherited from one or both parents.

The appearance of sarcoids, or lumps that look suspiciously like them at pre purchase examinations of young horses present a particular problem. They are considered as an unsoundness but people may go ahead with the purchase if they have successfully treated cases before and are not put off by the prospect of managing them.

It is said that there are over 40 different sarcoid treatments world-wide which shows that there is no one single method that will be effective for treatment in each case. Horses should be treated at an early stage in the disease when lesions are small and treatment before four years of age appears to have a better prognosis. Each sarcoid is different and unpredictable and no matter how similar two sarcoids look, a treatment that works for one might not work for another. Many vets will be guided by the wealth of experience provided by the Sarcoid Portal referral service which has been overseen by Professor Knottenbelt for many years. The number of treatment options is increasing all the time and it is that experience that helps to guide us to a successful outcome.



Application of toxic creams is often the recommended treatment, but this requires repeated treatments. Where appropriate, laser surgery or cryosurgery have helped by providing a single treatment for cases that are not amenable to repeated treatments.

**AUTUMN AND WINTER WORMING****Kristen Holland - BVetMed (hons) MRCVS**

After a spring and summer of worm egg counts, it is now time to think about autumn and winter worm control. We recommend that worm egg counts be continued until October time, with horses being wormed if required according to the results of their worm egg count.

Regular worm egg counts through spring, summer and autumn will help to give you an idea of whether there is a worm burden on your pasture or in individual horses.

Whilst tape worms cannot reliably be detected via a worm egg count, tapeworm burdens can be detected and assessed by a tapeworm saliva test. This will detect antibodies to tapeworms, high levels of these in the saliva indicate that there is a large tapeworm burden and that the horse will need treatment for tapeworm.

Only worming horses according to the results of tapeworm saliva tests and worm egg counts has many benefits, such as reducing the building resistance to worming medications and horses not being given unnecessary drugs.

When a horse is wormed, it is best to move the horse onto a rested pasture a few days post treatment. This helps the horse to become worm free; not ingesting worm eggs from the dirty pasture and becoming re-infected. As usual good management such as poo picking, mixed grazing and the quarantine of new arrivals all help to reduce the chances of horses developing worm burdens.



As winter approaches, some worms will start to encyst in the horses intestinal walls. They will live here throughout the winter and will not progress in their life cycle or lay eggs. This is why worm egg counts are generally not performed during the winter. In the spring, these worms will emerge from the intestinal walls and continue their life cycles, becoming adults and laying eggs. This mass emergence can cause severe intestinal problems such as colitis and your horse can become very ill with diarrhoea. The same problems can occur if there is a large worm burden heading into winter when the worms all encyst at the same time.

When going into winter we recommend that all horses are wormed around the time of the first frost, regardless of worm egg count readings throughout the year to prevent worms encysting over winter.

**\*\*During September any positive worm egg counts will receive a FREE wormer, please drop labelled samples at either Newbiggin or Dalston receptions\*\***

## DENTALS

**Sarah Hogg - BA VetMB MRCVS**



Regular dental care is essential for your horse's health. Teeth should be checked at least every 12 months. Horses younger than 6 or older than 18, and those with dental abnormalities, often require more frequent treatment to keep their mouths healthy.

Even if horses are in pain from dental issues, they will still want to eat and may continue to readily accept the bit. A full oral examination with a speculum (gag) is needed to see any problems. This is why we offer **free dental checks** when visiting your horse.

Some signs that suggest your horse needs an examination include:

- Quidding (dropping half-chewed balls of food)
- Bad breath
- Weight loss (often not obvious at this time of year!)
- Biting issues or problems working on one rein in the school
- Head shaking or head tilt
- Facial swelling
- Nasal discharge
- Colic or choke



Once the speculum is in place, we can assess any sharp edges and check for ulcers, diastema (a gap between teeth), gum disease, fractures or damage to any sensitive structures, wolf teeth, retained 'caps' (baby teeth) or caries (rotting teeth). All of these conditions can be treated at the yard and we can offer you advice on keeping your individual horse's mouth as healthy as possible.

Most conditions can be treated on the yard, but we welcome all horses to our clinic at Newbiggin where there are stocks and extra staff on hand to make the process less stressful for you. Horses seen at the clinic are not charged a visit fee.

As qualified veterinary surgeons, we are able to provide sedation, pain relief and local anaesthesia where required. This allows a safer, more thorough examination of the mouth and more precise treatment with less pain and stress for your horse. We are also happy to sedate for other equine dental technicians, although we recommend you check they are qualified members of the British Association of Equine Dental Technicians (full list at <http://www.baedt.com/?c=5400>).

**\*\*During October and November any equine dentals (with or without sedation) will receive a 15% discount as part of the autumn dental offer\*\***

## FIRST AID WORKSHOP 23RD AUGUST

Sarah and Kristen held a first aid workshop at Parkers Equestrian, Cockermouth on Friday 23rd August. During the afternoon they covered bandaging, when to call the vet, what to do in an emergency, colic and laminitis as well as other aspects of general first aid.

They had a great group of people attending who were all willing to get stuck in and ask lots of questions. Hopefully everyone that came found the workshop useful and are now bandaging experts!

Well done to Rebecca Parker who won the first aid kit, not fixed at all when nephew Carter pulled her name out of the pot!

Look out for further details of more workshops running during the Autumn.



## Contact us:

### **Paragon Veterinary Group**

Carlisle House, Townhead Road

Dalston, Carlisle, CA5 7JF

Tel: (01228) 710208

[equine@paragonvet.com](mailto:equine@paragonvet.com)

### **Townhead Veterinary Centre**

Newbiggin, Stainton,

Penrith, CA11 0HT

Tel: (01768) 483789

[equine@paragonvet.com](mailto:equine@paragonvet.com)

