

ISSUE 2 Summer 2019

Equine NEWS

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VETERINARY GROUP



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.

On the cover for the Summer edition are Flicker and her foal Axel, owned by Dawn and Elisha Wilson-Evans. Flicker joined us during 2018 for artificial insemination which has resulted in Axel!

Our Spring cover star Brackenbank Rosebud gave birth to a lovely filly on the 6th May who has been christened Brackenbank Ella May, both are doing well.

Please email equine@paragonvet.com if you have any topic suggestions for either the newsletter or Facebook page.

STAFF NEWS

Kelly was away from work during the last week of May to keep an eye on her mare Wegas who was due to foal. Wegas gave birth to a lovely, strong filly foal (Ella) in the early hours of Sunday 26th May.



The foaling went well and after a visit from Paul to remove the retained cleansing from Wegas and to help get Ella suckling properly they are both now thriving. Ella is proving to be a stropky little madam and will no doubt keep everyone on their toes!



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.

NEWS

FLU UPDATE

There have been further small outbreaks of Flu across Northern England in Yorkshire, Cheshire, Manchester, Lancashire and Northumberland during May. The vast majority of the horses affected by the virus in the last few months have been unvaccinated. We continue to recommend the vaccination of all horses. Any large movement of horses brings risks and as Appleby Horse Fair is now upon us we urge owners to be vigilant when looking out for clinical signs of Flu. If you have any concerns please give us a call.

LAMINITIS

During May we have seen a large number of horses and ponies suffering from laminitis. The majority of affected animals have either been diagnosed with PPID (Cushing's Disease) or EMS (Equine Metabolic Syndrome) using a blood sample. In the case of EMS horses they tend to be significantly overweight. We are advising owners to keep a close eye on their horse, pony and donkey bodyweights, keeping body condition scores as close to the recommended 3/5 as possible. This increase in cases will also have been influenced by the mild Winter, with horses and ponies coming into the Spring without a period of hardship. Please speak to us for further advice if you feel your horse is starting to show clinical signs of laminitis.

COMPLIMENTARY CUSHING'S DISEASE (PPID) TESTING

Throughout the year we are able to offer FREE laboratory fees for PPID testing on horses that have not previously been tested or that are not previously on veterinary treatment for Cushing's Disease.

Owners will need to visit www.careaboutcushings.co.uk to sign up and apply for a voucher.

The voucher code will need to be given to the vet when they come to take a blood sample. The website also has lots of useful information about the disease.



Please speak to one of the equine team if you have any questions or would like to discuss whether testing would be beneficial for your horse.

ENDOSCOPY

Paul May - BVMS MRCVS

A respiratory endoscope is an important piece of equipment in performance horse management and has an equally important use in many other applications. Performance horses are often examined to look for evidence of blood or mucus in their airways and to assess the function of the larynx and the soft palate. All of these have a bearing on how a horse may perform in competition and the examination will give a guide as to any treatment required.



The quality of the image is very important as is the ease of getting the scope down into the horses airways. We have recently upgraded our endoscopes to include a new video endoscope. Until recently the active life of batteries was not good enough to make cordless units workable. The changes in bulbs and batteries mean we can now get bright illumination and good duration of power without the need for electric cables. This makes the equipment a lot more user friendly around yards. On the equipment we now have, it is possible to record a video and take still photos. All of this comes in a finer scope so the horse does not object to the examination so much.

What are the reasons why we scope horses?

- In cases where there are discharges at the nostrils and/ or a cough.
- Where there is an abnormal respiratory noise on exercise.
- For monitoring disease in the airway
- When investigating poorly performing horses.
- In cases of recurrent choke or difficulty in swallowing.
- Where there are swellings around the throat.

For further information please speak to one of the equine team.



HEAT AND HORSES

Kristen Holland - BVetMed (hons) MRCVS



As we enter the summer months it is important for us to be prepared when it comes to caring for our horses in hot weather.

Everyday care in extreme heat

During hot weather, a horse can triple its water consumption so it is important to check water supplies and ensure there is always sufficient clean water available. A horse should have access to at least 60L water per day in hot weather, increasing further with exercise. Providing them with a salt lick will encourage them to drink. If your horse is turned out during the day sufficient shade must be available, this can be gained from a field shelter, hedges or trees. If shade is limited it may be best to turn your horse out overnight and keep them in during the day. Fans can also be provided for horses if they are being kept inside during the warmer temperatures. In extreme heat it is sensible to reduce exercise intensity, this can be achieved with shorter sessions with less intense and slower work.

Competing during hot weather

Most equine sports enjoy a peak season during the summer months. Whilst sun can be lovely for spectators, your horse will require extra care whilst competing in this weather. Fitness is an essential consideration when competing horses during the summer months, the increased heat will provide an extra stress to the horse so it is essential to ensure that they physically prepared.



Sufficient preparation to ensure enough water will be available for your horse is important, sometimes bringing from home. It is not uncommon for a horse to refuse water whilst at a competition. Adding apple juice or a flavoured electrolyte sachet to the water being offered is a good way to tempt your horse to drink. If a horse is required to undertake strenuous exercise where they will sweat profusely then an electrolyte supplement should be fed at the correct dosage before and after competition.

After strenuous exercise horses must be cooled down sufficiently. Ensure your horse continues walking and start to sponge cool (not very cold) water all over their body. Scrape the excess water off and then sponge on more cool water. This ensures that the water is removed as it heats up and is replaced with cool water again. Continue to walk and sponge your horse until they have stopped blowing and their skin is no longer hot to touch. It is tempting to cover the horse in water where they are seen to be sweating, however it is important to cool the muscle groups such as the gluteals as this is where large amounts of heat is being generated.

Sunburn

A number of horses will be susceptible to sunburn. The most commonly affected areas are the white markings on the face e.g. around the muzzle and eyes. A child friendly, high factor (e.g. 50) sunscreen should be applied to these areas first thing in the morning and reapplied throughout the day. Horses with sunburn will show signs of inflammation, dryness, blistering and hair loss over the affected area. They may also become head shy.

Photosensitization can be seen in the summer but it is not unique to these months, photosensitization is excess sensitivity of the skin to sunlight. Un-pigmented areas of the skin are usually affected, becoming inflamed. This can be caused by the consumption of certain plants or liver disease.

Flies

Flies can be a problem in the Summer months and these insects can affect each horse differently. Flies can cause a large range of problems from irritation ranging through to problems with eyes, udders, sheaths, wounds and skin. Using a good repellent, specialist rugs and masks will help to combat the problems with flies. The location of fly habitats should also be considered, they will generally be in higher concentration around wooded areas and natural water supplies. See Rob's article for further information on Sweet Itch.

Heat stroke

When a horse's body temperature rises above the point where their normal body temperature regulatory methods can work to cool the horse down, heat stroke develops. Heat stroke is most likely to develop when the horse is asked to perform to a level they are not fit enough to perform at, in hot/ humid conditions, when the horse is dehydrated/ has an electrolyte imbalance and when no shade is available to a horse standing out in the sun all day. Young foals are particularly susceptible to heat stroke.

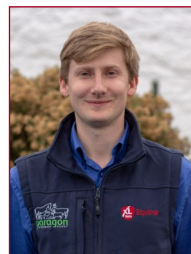
Clinical signs of heat stroke include; an increased respiratory and heart rate, severe sweating, reluctance to move, dullness, a prolonged skin tent, sunken eyes and a rectal temperature above 40°C. If extreme heat stroke is suspected a vet should be called immediately. A horse suffering from a milder heat stroke should be removed from direct sunlight as soon as possible. It can then be treated as you would a horse following heavy exercise, using walking and cool water to bring the horse's respiratory rate back to normal and offering cool water to drink possibly containing electrolytes. If the horse will not drink and has a prolonged skin tent then it may be necessary for a vet to stomach tube the horse with some fluids.



The Summer months are a fantastic time to enjoy with our horses, and the risks can be avoided easily with sufficient preparation and care.

SWEET ITCH

Rob Peckham - BVMedSci (hons) BVM BVS (hons) MRCVS

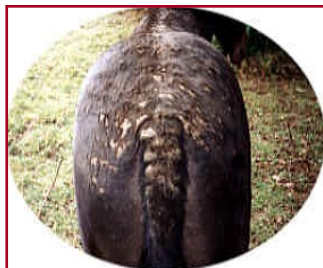
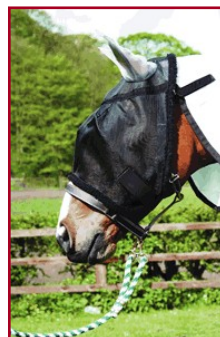


Sweet itch is a common disease of horses in summer, causing them to rub their mane, tail and body. It is caused by an allergy to the saliva of the *Culicoides* midge. The animal can be bitten anywhere, however in most cases they will then rub their mane or tail. The usual times we see sweet itch, are from late spring to late autumn when the midges are at their most prevalent. Sweet itch is usually diagnosed due to the time of year and symptoms, however your vet may want to take skin samples to rule out other causes of itching.

There are three main approaches to sweet itch; midge avoidance, soothing creams/shampoo's and medications.

The best and most effective method is midge avoidance which includes:

- Stabling from mid-afternoon to mid-morning as midges are most active dawn until dusk.
- Using stable fans can help to reduce the number of midges in the stable.
- Fly rugs, such as a *Boett* rug provide a physical barrier against the midges.
- Fly/Midge repellents, especially those with contain *permethrin*, such as Switch which lasts for a couple of days.
- The use of windy fields and avoiding areas with standing water.



Using soothing creams/shampoo's on the affected areas won't treat the problem, but can improve the comfort of a Sweet itch horse. Products containing Oatmeal are often gentle and very soothing. *Benzylbenzoate* can also help, but be very careful if the skin is broken as it can irritate these areas.

The final option is to use medications, such as steroids to control the allergic reaction. Whilst steroids are effective, they do have a link to laminitis, so we recommend using the other approaches first.

Allergy testing is an expanding area, which can be coupled with desensitisation therapy. If you are interested in going down these routes, it is worth discussing it with one of our vets for more information as it is a complex topic.

VISIT ZONING

We have set up three 'zones' which cover visits in the wider area that we travel to. Initially our aim is to have a vet in the below areas on the listed day. In the long run we hope to be able to efficiently group the visits in the 'zoned' areas and offer a discounted visit charge, when carrying out routine work such as vaccinations, blood samples, dentals and examinations.

We understand that not everyone will be able to accommodate a visit to their horse on the 'zoned' day for the area that they reside in and we will be happy to arrange your appointment at a different time, so don't be put off by these guidelines.

TUESDAY - ZONE 1 - West Coast - including Cockermouth, Workington and Keswick areas

WEDNESDAY - ZONE 2 - Eden Valley - including Appleby, Kirkby Stephen and Tebay areas

THURSDAY - ZONE 3 - Northern Cumbria - including Carlisle, Brampton, Wigton and Silloth areas

Please speak to one of the equine team if you have any further questions.

DIARY DATES

Look out for further details about our Autumn client evenings:

September - Old friends and knowing when the time has come to say goodbye.

October - Gastric ulcers and colic.



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