

ISSUE 20 Winter 2023

Equine NEWS

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Equine

COMPASSION, CARE AND CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

The cover star for our winter edition of the equine newsletter is Scout owned by Jennifer Hunter. Scout battles with Equine Metabolic Syndrome (EMS), but with careful weight management he has lost 100kg over the past 2 years. He's a very nosy boy and loves hacking. Jennifer uses clicker training with Scout as part of his management, he has learnt a few tricks along the way!

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

****STAFF NEWS****

Charlotte will be heading off on maternity leave in the middle of December to welcome her, and husband Matt's third child. We wish them all the best and look forward to welcoming Charlotte back at the end of 2024.

Kelly will be leaving us at the end of December to head home and work on the family dairy farm alongside partner Mark. Kelly joined the practice 15 years ago after graduating from University. During this time she has worked as part of the equine support team and in more recent years on the equine leadership team.

Kelly will continue to provide some days of holiday and out of hour cover so you may still see her at Newbiggin on occasion. Although we are sorry to see her go we wish Kelly and family all the best for the future.



****CHRISTMAS MEDICINE ORDERS****

The last medicine delivery to the practice before Christmas will be Friday 22nd December.

We will not receive another delivery until Wednesday 27th December so please make sure that any repeat prescriptions have been ordered by Wednesday 20th December at the latest, thank you.



CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS

On behalf of the practice the equine team would like to thank all of our clients for their support during 2023, it has been another busy year and we are looking forward to the challenges that 2024 will bring.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. During the festive period we will be providing our usual full emergency equine cover but the practice will only be open as follows:

	NEWBIGGIN	DALSTON
Friday 22nd December	8:00 - 5:30	8:00 - 7:00
Saturday 23rd December	8:30 - 12:30	8:30 - 1:00
Sunday 24th December	Closed - Emergencies	Closed - Emergencies
Monday 25th December	Closed - Emergencies	Closed - Emergencies
Tuesday 26th December	Closed - Emergencies	Closed - Emergencies
Wednesday 27th December	8:00 - 5:30	8:00 - 7:00
Thursday 28th December	8:00 - 5:30	8:00 - 7:00
Friday 29th December	8:00 - 5:30	8:00 - 7:00
Saturday 30th December	8:30 - 12:30	8:30 - 1:00
Sunday 31st January	Closed - Emergencies	Closed - Emergencies
Monday 1st January	Closed - Emergencies	Closed - Emergencies
Tuesday 2nd January	Normal working hours	Normal working hours



****CHRISTMAS CARDS****

As part of our drive to creating a more sustainable practice we will not be posting Christmas cards again this year.

Instead we will be making a charitable donation to The Great North Air Ambulance.

WINTER WORMING

Charlotte Pennington - BVetMed (hons) MRCVS



It is important to worm all horses, ponies and donkeys over the winter with a product that treats encysted small red worm larvae and, if necessary also tapeworm.

During the spring, summer and autumn months we advise performing regular faecal worm egg counts (FWECS) to assess parasite burden. As we get into winter they become less reliable as neither tapeworm or encysted small red worm larvae can be detected on a FWECS. A saliva test is available to check for tapeworm infection which can reduce unnecessary worming.

Tapeworms can cause digestive disturbances, loss of condition and colic if a horse develops a large burden of worms.

Small redworm larvae encyst within your horse's gut wall, especially in the autumn and winter when the temperatures decrease. If the larvae are not treated, a sudden mass emergence of the larvae in the spring when temperatures increase can cause severe gut damage leading to diarrhoea and colic which can be fatal.

We normally recommend waiting until after a few significant, hard frosts have occurred before giving winter wormers to horses. This is because the main worm we are concerned about treating over the winter is the encysted red worm larvae. The colder temperatures trigger the larvae to halt development and hibernate /encyst in the horse gut walls over the winter. They then lie dormant, waiting for warmer temperatures before reactivating development again in the spring. The idea of the winter wormer is to time the treatment for when the larvae are dormant and kill them. This specific timing avoids a sudden mass re-emergence of huge numbers of larvae when temperatures get warmer.



In previous years we have had significant frosts or even snow earlier on in the year meaning winter wormers have been given historically any time from October and have been effective.

This year however it has been much milder and at this point, later in November we have not yet seen a prolonged period of cold weather . Therefore we recommend waiting to administer treatment until December/early January. If you have given your horse a winter wormer already this year in October/early November bear in mind they may potentially need a repeat treatment in January to provide complete protection.

It is hugely important to make sure you use the correct type of product for winter worming as not all brands of wormers will kill encysted small red worm larvae and tapeworms. There are in fact only a few options that are actually available. The usual recommendation is a Moxidectin based product for encysted small red worm larvae and if needed this can be combined with a tapeworm treatment (Praziquantel). A 5 day treatment of Fenbendazole can also be used for encysted small red worm but is not as effective as Moxidectin.

Again I cannot stress enough how important it is to use the correct product, using the incorrect product is costly, ineffective, increases the chance of resistance developing and may actually put your horse at risk.

If you need any advice on winter worming then please speak to the equine team, we are more than happy to help guide you.

****NEW RCVS REGULATIONS****

On the 1st of September 2023 the Royal Veterinary College of Surgeons (RCVS) introduced new regulations that affect how Veterinary Surgeons dispense and/or prescribe controlled drugs and 'prescription-only (POM-V) medications'.

Any type of controlled drugs (Ventipulmin, Gabapentin, Codeine) and any type of antibiotics can now only be prescribed after your horse has had a physical examination by a veterinarian.

Antibiotics cannot be given based on a phone call, photograph or video only – a physical examination is legally required. This applies to all types of antibiotics - oral, injectable and topical (ointments, creams and sprays).



LIMB SWELLING

Freya Wood - BVSC MRCVS



What causes a horse's limbs to swell up when they suffer an injury? Does it mean the wound is infected?

Swelling is one of the primary signs of inflammation, along with heat and pain. There are many causes of swelling including changes to the blood vessels in the area, bruising, infection or as a result of reduced movement.

When an injury occurs, fluid moves into the area due to an increase in blood flow and the blood vessels undergo changes meaning they are more leaky. This allows proteins to leak out of the vessels which is followed by fluid. This is called oedema. Soft tissue swelling as a result of tendon or ligament damage is due to these changes. Trauma causes more damage to blood vessels allowing blood itself to leak into the area resulting in a haematoma (a bruise).



Swelling can be due to infection if there has been a cut or abrasion. Bacterial infection under the skin can occur quickly after injury, resulting in a swollen, warm leg that is painful to touch. This is usually just in one leg and the horse may have a temperature, be off their food, be non-weight-bearing and there may be fluid oozing from the skin. This is cellulitis and when it reaches this point will require a course of antibiotics and anti-inflammatories. This highlights the importance of checking horses daily for any signs of cuts or abrasions and then being treated appropriately to prevent cellulitis developing. This may be stitching or stapling if the wound is large, or if it is a small cut then keeping the area clean with salt water. Mud fever can also result in cellulitis so good management of mud fever is vital when small lesions occur to prevent this occurring as a consequence.

Limb swelling may not be directly due to the injury but the rest we give an injured horse, whether that is full box rest or rest from exercise. Blood and lymph (fluid with similar properties to blood plasma) move back to the heart aided by muscle contraction and increases in blood pressure. Horses have no muscle in their lower limbs so they have to rely on the one-way valves in the vessels and compression of the frog to push fluid back up the leg so when our horses are standing in for long periods fluid accumulates resulting in filled legs.

This will often resolve with exercise or turnout, but if your horse is on box rest due to injury then support bandages can help reduce filling as well as cold hosing and using ice boots.

There are more unusual causes of filled limbs, such as issues with the liver, internal parasites or allergic reactions so it is important to look at the health of the horse as a whole. If there is discomfort associated with filled legs or other signs such as weight loss or itchy skin then further investigations may need performed.

****PRESCRIPTION CHECKS****

A reminder that we are legally required to perform health checks every 6 months on horses that are receiving long term medication before we can issue repeat prescriptions.

This can be done whilst we are on the yard attending other horses or are doing other procedures, we can also arrange an appointment at another time if this is more convenient. These checks are to ensure that the horse is in good health and that the medication and dosage are still relevant for the prescribed condition.

Please give us a call for further information.



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 diagnosed with Cushing's Disease.

Check out www.careaboutcushings.co.uk for more information about Cushings Disease and the testing scheme. If your horse has been diagnosed with Cushings Disease you can sign up to join the membership platform, as part of this you will then be entitled to a yearly voucher for FREE lab fees when performing a monitoring test.



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.

CHRISTMAS FACEBOOK COMPETITION



The countdown to Christmas is now on! To celebrate and help kick start the festive cheer we are giving you the chance to win one of our equine first aid kits which are perfect to either keep on the yard or to take with you to events.

To be in with a chance of winning all you need to do is visit our Facebook page then **LIKE** our page, **LIKE and SHARE** the competition post and **COMMENT** with a picture of your horse, pony or donkey who will hopefully not require the use of the first aid kit if you win!

If you are not on Facebook and would like to enter the competition

please email

equine@paragonvet.com or call 017684 83789.



The winner will be picked at random on Monday 18th December



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