

ISSUE 17 Spring 2023

Equine NEWS

www.paragonvet.com



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COMPASSION, CARE AND CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

On the cover this Spring we have Macey who is owned by Sophie Dicker. Macey has been having a bit of a rough time recently but will hopefully soon be back to full health. She loves cross country and fun rides, although she is a chunky traditional she can be a real speed demon!

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

****EQUINE SUPPLEMENTS****

If you would like to try a FREE sample of one of the Hestevard supplements that we stock at the practice please visit

www.hestevard.com/freesample.html

The sample pack contains 2 free sachets and a discount voucher for your next purchase.

For more information about the Hestevard products that we stock at the practice please visit www.hestevard.com or speak to one of the equine vets.



EMERGENCY FOAL MILK PACKS

Although hopefully not needed we aim to have a couple of Aintree emergency foal milk tubs in stock at Newbiggin over the breeding season.

If you are having problems and find yourself in need of a tub, even out of hours please call 017684 83789 and speak to the equine team.



ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION 2023

Our 2023 breeding brochure is now available to download from the website (www.paragonvet.com).

We also have copies available in both Newbiggin and Dalston receptions or can post a copy to you if that is preferable.

****NEW FOR 2023—**we will not be accepting any mares for AI before the 1st April or any new mares after the 31st August.



Please note that we will continue to implement our Strangles testing policy that was introduced for the 2021 season for visiting AI mares.

All mares coming to stay at the practice will need to have had a negative strangles serology test within the 1-2 weeks before arrival. Further information about our Strangles testing policy can also be found on the website.

If you would like any further information about our breeding services please call 017684 83789 to speak to one of the equine team.

Facilities and Staff	Terms and Conditions
EQUINE BREEDING FACILITIES AT TOWNHEAD FARM: • Several stables and paddocks • Seven stables with CCTV • Including two large mares and foal houses • Liquid nitrogen semen storage tanks • Large outdoor exercise pens and yards	EQUINE VETS: Paul Hay Charlotte Pennington Freddy Ward Kathy Smith Suzanne Spurratt Hannah Edwards Hayley McVicar Mai Gray
EQUINE SUPPORT: 	HOW TO FIND US:

EQUINE BREEDING 2023
**NEW FOR 2023 - we will not be accepting any mares before the 1st April or after the 31st August.



Pre-breeding Assessments	Equine AI Package
THE REPRODUCTIVE AND FERTILITY ASSESSMENT INCLUDES: • General physical condition • Speculum examination of internal conformation • Rectal ultrasound scan of uterus and ovaries • Reproductive and Fertility Assessment £56.00 CEM swabs and EVA blood sample will be charged separately.	THE EQUIINE AI PACKAGE INCLUDES: • Reproductive and fertility assessment (1st cycle) • One week's stay at our Equine Thermo (ETM) centre and fees (£100 per day) • Up to 1 weeks grass livery (1st and 2nd Cycle) • Treatment and investigation of fertility problems • Ovarian induction injections to assist with timing of ovulation and/or insemination • Foal induction and/or ovulation induction drugs • Prepuberty diagnosis scans at 18 and 20 days post ovulation • Foal reduction up to 16 days post insemination • Night time checks by qualified staff • Regular phone calls to keep you informed on your mare's progress • PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL MARES MUST HAVE A NEGATIVE STRANGLES TEST AND A VACCINATION BEFORE ARRIVING FOR THEIR STAY - PLEASE SEE THE INSERT FOR FURTHER DETAILS**
017684 83789	www.paragonvet.com

SPRING EQUINE EVENING

Please join us on Tuesday 4th April at Newbiggin Village Hall (CA11 0HT) for our evening event

From 7pm we will be discussing Gastric Ulcers, Laminitis and other spring health issues



The event is free and open to all

Raffle in aid of the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) Trust and the Little Princess Trust

Tea, coffee and
lot's of cakes

We hope to see
you there



INCISOR TEETH PROBLEMS

Freya Wood - BVSC MRCVS



We talk a lot about dental disease in the cheek teeth but we need to not forget about the incisors and canines! Although these teeth are not requiring as much attention as the cheek teeth as they don't form the same sharp points that cause discomfort, there are a few issues that we encounter.

Incisors will always be checked as part of a routine dental examination. Sometimes there are extra incisors, particularly in young horses if the deciduous (baby) incisor has not fallen out

when the adult tooth erupts. These are often removed to allow the adult tooth to grow through.



In small ponies, particularly miniature Shetlands, overcrowding of teeth in small jaws can cause incisors, like the cheek teeth, to be displaced or rotated. This causes dental discomfort as food is able to get caught in the spaces between the teeth (diastema) resulting in painful gum disease. This is more easily managed than the diastema of the cheek teeth as they can be more easily accessed.

Some well behaved ponies will allow owners to clean carefully between these spaces to prevent build-up of food material and

reducing the amount of inflammation in the gums.

A condition that is of particular concern is EOTRH or Equine Odontoclastic Tooth Resorption and Hyperplasia. This is a painful condition that affects the incisor and canine teeth in some equines and was first identified as a condition in 2006. It affects horses in their late teens and older, the presenting signs can be hugely variable. Some horses can have difficulty biting onto food, particularly hard food, which is why your vet or equine dental technician may ask if your horse is still happy to bite down onto a carrot with their incisors. Others have swellings or draining tracts in the gums above the teeth.

Diagnosis is made on x-rays where we are able to see how many teeth are involved in the disease process and to what extent the disease is. Many treatment methods have been attempted but the only one with any success at reducing the horse's discomfort is removal of the affected teeth, and it is not uncommon to eventually have to have all the teeth removed as the disease is progressive.

It can seem very radical to remove all a horse's incisors, but these horses do extremely well. The disease itself is incredibly painful and it is a relief to the horse to have the affected teeth removed.

You will see many old horses and ponies with incisors so worn they are down to the gum line and this is exactly what it is like for the horses that have to have all the incisors removed. If you watch a horse eat, most of the action of taking hold of and tearing forage or eating their hard feed is done with the lips so they adapt very quickly. The only issue they seem to have is that they will stick their tongue out as the incisors are not there to hold the tongue in the mouth, but this is a cosmetic issue.

Sometimes we can see a horse with draining tracts in the gums and we are concerned about EOTRH but on closer examination they have open pulp horns causing an ascending infection in the teeth. These teeth need removing also as they are dead and are a potential source for infection in the tooth root as bacteria is able to travel up to the root.

The incisors can also give the vet or equine dental technician clues as to what is going on further back in the mouth. If the horse is not able to chew properly the incisors are worn unevenly and can become slanted. As the abnormalities in the cheek teeth are corrected the incisors will gradually correct themselves.



SWEET ITCH VACCINE UPDATE

Charlotte Pennington - BVetMed (hons) MRCVS



We have recently imported the Insol Dermatophyton vaccine to assist with sweet itch control this year. This article is a recap on the key information regarding sweet itch and a summary of the vaccine and it's recommendations.

Causes - Sweet itch (*Culicoides Hypersensitivity*), is a skin disease caused by an allergic reaction to midge bites. Affected horses and ponies are sensitive to the irritants in midge saliva, which cause a localised irritation within the skin as well as the reaction to the actual bite itself. This heightened sensitivity reaction causes intense itching leading affected horses to bite, scratch or rub at their skin causing further trauma. Sometimes the sensation is so strong that horses will cause severe damage to themselves or their environment.

Symptoms - Usually the affected areas are where the midges like to bite such as the mane, back and tail or occasionally the belly and legs. Itching causes rubbing, hair loss and skin damage. The broken skin can ooze and bleed and potentially become infected. Horses then end up in a vicious cycle where they can become very irritated by the constant itching, causing more damage and so on.

The signs of itchiness due to sweet itch are often worse in hot humid weather, especially around dawn and dusk and/or whenever there are more midges about. In the British climate the midges usually start flying and become a problem in spring (February onwards) and settle down and virtually disappear over winter when temperature is less than 4 degrees.



Ponies are generally more frequently affected by sweet itch. There is some evidence that susceptibility to sweet itch is genetic, with foals from an affected stallion or mare being more likely to develop the condition. Also there are certain breeds that seem more likely to be affected by sweet itch, including Icelandic, Welsh and Shetland ponies.

Diagnosis and treatment - It is usually fairly easy to diagnose sweet itch based on the history and clinical signs. It is important where needed to use medication to treat the damaged skin and calm the inflammatory reaction down.

What is used depends on the individual horse but such as steroids, antihistamines, soothing shampoos washes and creams can all be used. Alongside medication to reduce the inflammation another essential part of treatment is preventing the midges contacting the skin/biting and causing further damage , therefore breaking the cycle!

Recommendations For Prevention:

- Insect control - regular application of insect repellents, use of fly sheets or sweet itch specific rugs and stabling during times of high midge activity (dawn and dusk 4pm-8am).
- Barrier treatments coating the skin are useful .
- Where possible affected horses should be kept on more exposed fields with a good breeze (midge are not strong fliers) and keep affected horses and ponies well away from woodland and standing water, such as ponds.
- Water troughs should be cleaned regularly as they can act as breeding grounds for midges.
- Using insect-proof mesh on the windows and door of stables may help.
- There is limited research available and also anecdotal evidence from owners of horses suffering from sweet itch to suggest feed supplements designed to support skin health can help. This includes the likes of Cavelesse, Brewer's Yeast or Vitamin B supplements.

Insol Vaccine Information - Insol Dermatophyton is an exciting product which can help to battle Sweet Itch and other skin allergies. It is a vaccine originally developed to treat against ringworm, however has coincidentally been found to be helpful at combating sweet itch (it is used off licence in this country).

The initial vaccination course is split over two doses, (14 days between the 1st and 2nd). Subsequently the 1st and 2nd vaccines can be repeated after 9 months for optimal ongoing protection or re-started again the following year before the midges start to become a problem.

Unfortunately the vaccine can not be given within 2 weeks of any other vaccines or to pregnant or lactating mares. The vaccine will be effective from 5 weeks after the 1st vaccination which is why it's important to get booked in ASAP if you feel this would be beneficial for your horse. Ideally we are looking to get the vaccinations done during early March before horses get into the itching cycle.

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

Paragon

Horse Health Plan

Have you heard
about Paragon's
healthcare plan
for horses and
ponies?

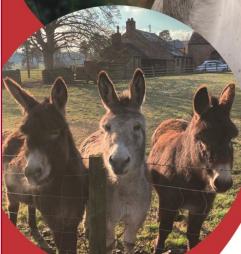
Spread the cost of routine
healthcare with a direct debit



Only
£15 a
month

Benefits include:

- Annual vaccination for equine influenza and tetanus
- 10% off first & second vaccines when starting a primary course
- 10% off additional 6 monthly influenza vaccines required for competing
- Annual dental examination and routine rasping, including sedation if required
- Annual health check, including examination of eyes, heart, lungs, skin and a trot up
- Worming programme, including 3 faecal worm egg counts and winter wormer
- 1 free visit per year for routine health care
- 10% off lifetime medications
- 10% off Paragon equine supplements



Speak to us today to join
our Horse Health Plan:
017684 83789
equine@paragonvet.com

 **paragon**
VETERINARY GROUP

OBESITY

Selina Squarotti - BVMS MRCVS



Being overweight is one of the most serious and life-threatening issues a horse can have. It increases risk of heart and lung diseases and arthritis, and it has a direct link to laminitis, which is one of the most common causes of euthanasia in equine practice.

Before domestication, horses lived as grazers, covering many miles daily and they were either growing, pregnant, with foal at foot or mating. In the wild, horses eat a large amount of grass in summer, converting it to fat, to survive the winter, when there is no grass growth.

Today, this metabolic mechanism still operates, yet many horses enter the winter being fat, but the 'winter lean period' never arrives, because they are then rugged and well fed over the winter. This all contributes to the so called 'Equine metabolic syndrome', where obesity, insulin resistance and increased circulating cortisol will, in many cases, lead to laminitis.

All horses should be managed with a combination of right diet, regular and suitable exercise, and good health care to maintain a healthy body weight. Tools for assessing body weight and condition are a weighbridge (the most accurate method), weigh-tape and body condition scoring.

Weigh-tapes can be frustrating, but for every kilogram of fat that can be seen on the outside of the horse, there is another one on the inside around its organs. Horses tend to lose the

internal fat first; it is then important not to be discouraged if not much difference can be seen.

The same tape should be used for each measurement, making sure the horse is taped by the same person, in the same place and at the same time of day each time.



Body condition scoring is the most practical way to assess the body weight of a horse. The easiest system scores horses from 0 - 5, 0 being emaciated, 3 being healthy and 5 being obese. Fat tends to build up on the neck, especially the crest, wither and back bones, behind the shoulders and where the shoulders meet the neck, on the ribs, the point of the hip, tail head and rump.

For any horse scoring 4.5 and above or a laminitic of 3.5 or above, grazing should be stopped. It may seem drastic, but your horse's health is at risk. Only hay (soaked if laminitic) and a low calorie balancer should be fed.

Hay should be weighed and the total ratio per 24 hours for an obese horse that has not had laminitis is 1.5% of the current body weight, 1.3% for a laminitic.

Not being allowed access to grass might limit horses' natural behaviour. To avoid boredom, they should be allowed to spend more time on the yard, in the arena or dry paddocks or can be stabled in different pens for day and night. To slow down eating, the haynet could be hung in the centre of the stable, rather than against the wall and hay can be double netted.

Once the horse reaches a body condition of 3.5-4, grazing can be slowly reintroduced, but limited. Grazing muzzles can reduce the amount horses can eat by 50%, without stopping them from eating. Horses are very adaptable and grazing muzzles are no more abnormal than being ridden, stabled or rugged!

Whenever possible, exercise should be increased, and rugging reduced. Overweight horses have plenty of fat to keep them warm and cold weather should be used to let horses naturally burn off fat to keep warm (shivering). It is more important to provide horses with access to a shelter if outside for long periods, than rugging.

Lastly, horses on a diet might appear unhappy, but obesity is a dangerous disease, overweight horses are unwell and recurrent laminitis can lead to euthanasia. It is important to understand what horses need and how they were designed to live, to provide them with a better life.



WORMING ADVICE/ WARNING

As we approach the end of the winter we start to think about our spring and summer worming programmes. We strongly recommend performing worm egg counts at 3 monthly intervals throughout the spring and summer from March to ensure we are using our worming products appropriately and responsibly.

If your horse has not had a **MOXIDECTIN** based wormer this winter they will not have been treated for encysted redworm (larval stages). Ivermectin wormers **ARE NOT** effective in treating for encysted redworm. Ivermectin only kills the adult worms so in order to kill the larval stages that encyst (hibernate) in the gut wall over the winter moxidectin must be used.



We advise the use of moxidectin in the winter to protect from disease that can be caused by the mass emergence of these larvae in the spring which can cause serious acute or chronic disease including colic, sudden onset diarrhoea and weight loss. The acute condition "larval cyathostominosis" which is caused by the mass emergence has a 50% fatality rate. We have seen a number of these cases already this year

with the mild winter. If your horse has not had a treatment for encysted redworm this winter or if you wish to discuss a worming plan for your horse going into the spring please call and speak to one of the equine team who will be able to advise.



Contact us:

Paragon Veterinary Group

Carlisle House, Townhead Road
Dalston, Carlisle, CA5 7JF
Tel: (01228) 710208
equine@paragonvet.com

Townhead Veterinary Centre

Newbiggin, Stainton,
Penrith, CA11 0HT
Tel: (01768) 483789
equine@paragonvet.com

