

BREEDING SEASON REVIEW CONTINUED

exposure to worms when it is young. Foals can then start a worming programme around five months of age, where they can then follow the adult worming programme.

Due to their low level of natural immunity foals are susceptible to large infestations of worms. Severely affected foals may present with diarrhoea or unthriftiness. If large worm infestation is suspected prior to five months of age then worming may start earlier. However some products cannot be used in foals younger than four months so always read the label carefully.

Castration is usually performed around six-twelve months of age. It can be done in the standing horse at your home and a good time would be spring before the flies come. Micro-chipping can be performed at any age but new laws have been brought in this season making

it a requirement for any horse to be micro-chipped now when they are applying for a passport. Yes it is a big needle for little foals but we use local anaesthetic and most foals are very good for the procedure.

We would like to wish all of our clients every success for next year.



COMPLIMENTARY THERAPY PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Following an article in the last newsletter we would like to highlight a number of other professional governing bodies for complimentary therapy professionals.

IEBWA - International Equine Bodyworkers Association

AMCST - Association of McTimoney - Corley Spinal Therapists

ESMA - Equine Sports Massage Association

ACPAT and **MCA** as mentioned in the last newsletter.

All associations require CPD hours for membership, give professional insurance and a place for people to register concerns.



OFFER OF THE AUTUMN

FREE WORM EGG COUNT* (NORMALLY £12.50)

WITH EQVALAN DUO AVAILABLE FROM THE PRACTICE FOR JUST £16.80.

*WEG TO BE TAKEN 6-8 WEEKS AFTER WORMING

CALL THE OFFICE FOR MORE INFORMATION

Loch Leven

EQUINE PRACTICE

Autumn
Newsletter
2009

INTRODUCTION

There has certainly been a lot going on since the last newsletter! We would like to introduce and welcome Jen Lugton to our team, tell you about our exciting talk with highly respected equine vet, Bob Ordidge and of course to say we hope you have all had a good season.

Unfortunately winter is approaching fast so please do be safety conscious when squeezing in rides before and after work and wear your hi-viz gear.

NEWS

A WARM WELCOME

A warm welcome to the newest member of our team - Aussie vet Jen Lugton. Jen graduated with a degree in Veterinary Science at the University of Sydney following which she went on to complete a 16 month internship at Australia's largest Equine Hospital, Goulburn Valley Equine Hospital, in Shepparton, Victoria. "I am really pleased to be here, apart from the weather!! It is great to be living and working in such a beautiful area of Scotland" said Jen.



FREE RESPIRATORY HEALTH TALK

We will take great pleasure in welcoming world renowned equine vet, Bob Ordidge BVSC, Cert ES(Orth), MRCVS to the practice to give a talk on respiratory health. The talk, which is guaranteed to be extremely interesting will cover all aspects of clinical signs of respiratory conditions, diagnosing the condition, treatment and management. Bob has given presentations all over Europe and is kindly agreed to come to Scotland to present a talk. The talk is on Friday 13th November at Dewars Centre, Perth. 7.30pm start. Limited tickets available. Contact the office for your FREE ticket.



FREE CLIENT SHEETS

Free client information sheets are now available from the office on most equine topics ranging from laminitis and grass sickness to sarcoids and gastric ulcers. Please call the office if you would like one.

NEWS CONTINUED

PRACTICE STANDARDS SCHEME INSPECTION



We are delighted to say that we have passed our inspection and are now a Tier 1 Accredited Practice. The inspector was extremely complimentary and in his report wrote, "The chairman noted the comments that the Practice was extremely well run and the standards of knowledge and care of equines was second to none. The Inspector wished to thank Mrs Somerville for the time and effort she had spent preparing for the inspection and was particularly grateful for the faultless presentation of the paperwork."

DISCOUNT CALLS

Don't forget you can still get your 5% discount if you pay your bill on the day, either in cash, cheque or by credit/debit card. You can also save even more money on dentals by bringing your horse to one of our fortnightly dental clinics at the practice, which entitles you to an extra 10% off. Call the practice to find out when the next clinic is.

BEVA



It's that time of year again! The annual BEVA congress was held down in Birmingham this year and I'm pleased to say all of the vets managed to get down for some action packed CPD - lectures to you and me! It is such a great opportunity for equine vets from all over to come together and listen to some of the world's best equine specialists. We are going to be investing heavily in our training programme over the next couple of years as we know that in order to keep giving you guys a fantastic equine vet service we have to keep ploughing time and money into training and continued learning. Both Pete and Hugh are enrolled to sit their equine certificates which will make them one of only a small number of equine vets in private practice in Scotland to hold this qualification.

MEET JOHNNY!

While Hugh is temporarily off following surgery to his wrist we will be joined by highly qualified and experienced equine vet, Johnny Withers BVMS CertEP MRCVS. Johnny has recently completed a three year scholarship in equine surgery and will be joining the team part time from November to February, following which he will be with us full time until April, when Hugh will be back at work.



SWIMMING THE CHANNEL!

Jen, Liz Somerville and Liz Burton have all signed up for a swimming challenge, 'Aspire Channel Swim'. The challenge, which is in aid of spinal injury charity Aspire is to swim the length of the channel - 22 miles in 12 weeks. This equates to 1,416 lengths of our local pool in between juggling work, children and horses!!

NEWS CONTINUED

VETERINARY NURSE JOINS THE TEAM

We are delighted to welcome Lynsey McKay to our team, as our first qualified vet nurse, "Lynsey is initially working part time helping with our in-patients, going on visits with the vets, organising the stock side of the practice and developing our client education programmes. She brings a vast amount of equine nursing experience to the practice having worked in a big equine practice down south and more recently at Glasgow's Weipers centre. As part of our on-going client education programme Lynsey is going to be running some free clinics covering first aid, weight management and general health issues. If you are interested in her visiting your yard please call the office and we can tailor the clinics to meet your individual needs" said Liz.



OUT OF ACTION



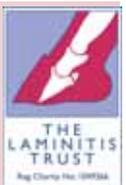
As many of you will already know Hugh is going to be out of action for the next six months. Contrary to popular belief(!) unfortunately he is not taking a holiday, instead he is going to have an operation on his wrists. As a result of 'Ulna Impaction Syndrome' Hugh has to undergo surgery to remove a section of bone from his ulna. During his recovery instead of annoying everyone in the office Hugh is going to use his time wisely and is studying for his Certificate in Equine Orthopedics with Liverpool University. "Having accepted the frustrating situation that I am genetically malformed in both my wrists(!) I am determined to put the next six months to good use! I have enrolled in the Certificate of Equine Orthopedics. This qualification is intended for equine vets who spend the majority of their time involved in lameness investigations and orthopedic surgery. It is usually a two year undertaking but the plan is to work through it in the next 12 months!" explained Hugh.

10% OFF DENTAL WORK

Bring your horse to the practice for one of our fortnightly dental clinics and get 10% off the cost of your dental work. In addition to this you will make a further saving as there is NO visit fee. The clinics run on the second and fourth Friday of every month. Call Liz or Patty to book your appointment.

LAMINITIS CAUSES EXPLAINED

Following a misunderstanding regarding causes of laminitis in the last newsletter LLEP would like to clarify that there are many causes of laminitis. While the most common cause is Obesity / Overeating, other factors may include Toxaemia, Trauma / Mechanical, Iatrogenic (The administration of corticosteroid drugs can induce laminitis), hormones and stress. For more information on laminitis go to www.laminitis.org



POISONOUS PLANTS

Poisonous plants come in many different shapes and sizes, but have one thing in common; if eaten they can all be deadly for your horse.

As each plant is different each produces different clinical signs. These include colic, abdominal pain, convulsions and liver damage. Some have mild effects which can be treated by your vet, while others, such as yew, deadly nightshade, water dropwort and water hemlock can be fatal in hours.



Deadly Nightshade

The highest profile poisonous plant is ragwort and is the thought to be the most common cause of serious liver damage in horses in the UK. The vets have noticed an alarming amount growing alongside grazing horses this year.

It has recently been reported around 500 horses and ponies are estimated to have died of liver failure due to ragwort poisoning last year. With a rise in the amount of ragwort seen this number unfortunately may be set to increase.



Ragwort

Ragwort is highly poisonous to horses and the toxic effects can be attributed to pyrrolizidine alkaloids (PAs). PAs are found in all parts of the plants, including the seeds. The PAs are rapidly absorbed from the gastrointestinal tract

where they pass to the liver. Here they are

broken down to produce toxic compounds which cause problems with the liver cells and prevent cell division. Consequently, the liver cells are unable to divide and become enlarged cells. When these cells die they release toxins, so the toxic effect to the liver is continuous.

The biggest problem with ragwort poisoning is that the liver is able to maintain normal function until at least two-thirds of its tissue has been destroyed. The allows a huge amount of damage to occur before it is detected. By the time the horse shows any clinical signs the damage to the liver is so extensive that treatment is limited.

Clinical signs seen in each horse vary but may include weight loss, photosensitive dermatitis (inflammation affecting the non-pigmented skin such as white socks and pink muzzles), lethargy or change in behavior.

As the condition deteriorates the horse will become ataxic (in coordinated) and may be seen to stagger and wander around with no purpose. In severe cases the horse may become blind and have difficulties breathing. These signs can develop quickly so in extremely severe cases the horse may be found dead without warning.



Photosensitive Dermatitis

POISONOUS PLANTS



Hemlock Water-Dropwort

Currently there are no simple tests available to detect ragwort poisoning so it is imperative that pasture is kept ragwort free and hay is checked for signs of dead ragwort. Blood can be taken and sent for analysis which can detect damage to the liver, and liver function can be assessed by measuring bile acids, although neither is specific to ragwort. Further diagnostic work involves liver biopsies and ultrasonography.

It has been reported that clinicians at the Liverpool Vet. School have been working with scientists from the University's Protein Function Group to develop a test to detect early signs of exposure to ragwort. A pilot study has shown that the test is effective at recognising changes in the blood due to small amounts of pyrrolizidine alkaloids.

Check your fields regularly and remove all traces of anything poisonous to your horse. If you are at all concerned then please call us.



Oak tree and acorn (inset)



Yew



Bracken

Poisons plants

High risk: Black Nightshade, Box, Bracken, Cowbane, Cuckoo Pint, Deadly Nightshade, Foxglove, Hellebore, Hemlock, Hemlock Water-Dropwort, Henbane, Herb Paris, Horsetail, Iris, Laburnum, Larkspur, Lily of the Valley, Linseed, Lupin, Meadow Saffron, Monk's Hood, Potato, Privet, Ragwort, Rhododendron, Yew.

Lower risk: Acorns, Alder Buckthorn, Black Bryony, Broom, Buckthorn, Buckwheat, Buttercup, Celandine (greater), Charlock, Cherry Laurel, Chickweed, Clover, Columbine, Corncockle, Darnel, Ground Ivy, Hemp Nettle, Horse Radish, Marsh Marigold, Melilot, Mercury, Oak, Pimpernel, Poppy, Rhubarb, Rush, St John's Wort, Sorrel, Spurge, Thorn Apple, White Bryony, Woody Nightshade.

BANDAGING CORRECTLY

You may need to bandage your horses' legs for a number of reasons and when done correctly can offer support. However bad bandaging can have a detrimental effect on your horses' legs. Use these simple steps to help you get the perfect bandages.

Stable bandages



Make sure your wrap, or gamgee is clean and free of shavings and hay. Working from the front of the cannon bone back to the tendons mould the wrap around the leg ensuring that there are no creases. The edge of the pad should not start or finish on the back of the tendons.



Use a stable bandage (not elasticated) and start at the top of the leg. Ensure that you bandage from front to back and that you apply an even resistance. Do not pull the bandage tight over the tendons. Space your loops evenly.



Keep your resistance even around the fetlock moulding the wrap to the shape of the leg. Continue back up the leg.



Your bandage should finish just below the knee leaving some of the wrap beneath exposed. It should be tight enough that it won't slip down, but you should be able to fit an index finger all the way around. Bandages that are too tight may lead to bandage rubs and cause many more problems.

Common Mistakes

Practice makes perfect, so if in doubt - keep trying! As vets we recommend that you always bandage both legs to offer equal support and that bandages are re-done at least once a day.



Bandaging from the tendon forwards to the cannon bone.

This puts extra pressure on the tendons and is more likely to lead to rubs and tendon damage.



Un-even pressure and loose bandage.

This can be equally as dangerous bandaging too tight. Loose loops may allow the bandage to catch on something, while tight bandages can damage circulation.



Bandaging above or below the wrap.

The wrap should be exposed above and below the bandage, providing support for the leg. Stable bandages should never be applied to legs that are not protected with a wrap (or similar) as they can easily rub.

If you are not sure how to bandage then practice and ask someone experienced to check them before leaving them on overnight.

Polo Wraps

This are used for exercise and are made from inelastic material (as oppose to exercise bandages which are fully elasticated).

Using the same technique as when applying a stable bandage but only bandage down to the bottom of the fetlock. Ensure that your bandage finishes below the knee.



Top Tip!

When storing bandages wrap one around the other and then tuck the end into the body of the bandage, keeping them rolled up if you drop them! This is also great for storage so pairs of bandages don't get separated and excellent for keeping your yard tidy.



CASE STUDY - WORKING WITH THE FARRIER

Racehorse who had lost his form

With increased demands on the competition horse it is essential to have an excellent support team of vets, farriers and physiotherapists/animal manipulators in place who work together.

The age-old saying 'No foot no horse' is as true today as it ever was. The farrier plays a vital role in keeping the performance horse at its peak. In the case of many racehorses a flat footed, low heeled conformation is found, so consequently foot and heel inflammation are not uncommon.

Over time this can impact on the horses gait and stride length and may also refer additional effort to compensatory muscle groupings. This is relevant in all competition horses, but especially the racehorse and eventers whose stride length can determine results.

Unfortunately, farriers can be at a disadvantage as they do not have x-ray vision! Although feet can be trimmed to visual markers it is impossible to see the internal structures of the foot without an x-ray.

assess the balance of the foot in relation to the pedal bone. Imbalances which are not visible to the naked eye can be observed and corrected.

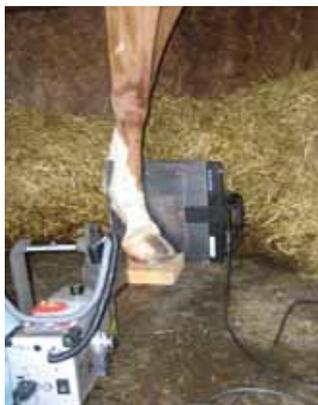
Case study



Before

The vets were called to see a racehorse who was not performing as well as was expected based on previous form. A chronic low grade lameness was detected behind which later responded very well to joint medication. At the time of the examination it was also noted that the horse had strong digital pulses to both front feet.

X-rays were advised which enabled us to visualise an imbalance of the weight distribution of the foot. Both front feet (like many TB's) were imbalanced with collapsed heels and long toes.



Having the digital system allows us to x-ray with the farriers present, enabling all to discuss the case whilst viewing the images. This allows the farrier to

CASE STUDY - WORKING WITH THE FARRIER



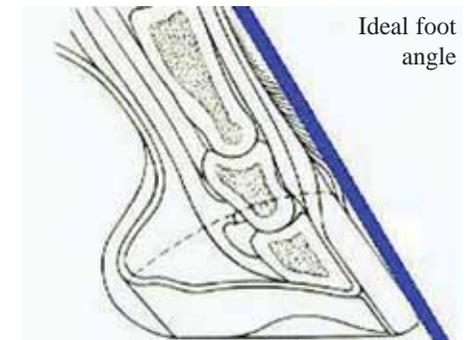
Before



After

By working together with the farrier, we were able to identify exactly where the pedal bone was sitting inside the foot - this allowed the foot to be trimmed precisely. Once balanced the horse was then able to increase its stride length and land more comfortably on his heels.

The proof of the benefits of working together as a team are in the pudding - as in this case the horse went out and won the next race.



Ideal foot angle

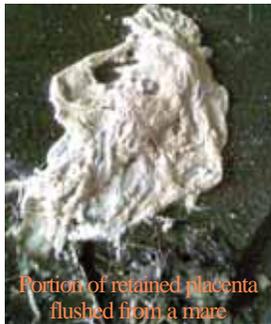


BREEDING SEASON REVIEW

With the addition of Jen to the team this season we have expanded our reproduction service and have been performing reproductive scans and Artificial Insemination (AI) on an increased number of mares.



While most of our clients have had an excellent season unfortunately it has not been the case for a small number of people and we are extremely sympathetic to these clients. All of these tragedies were cases of unavoidable bad luck and did not reflect the care or management of the horses. They do however highlight the importance of monitoring our mares when they are approaching foaling.



The most frequent problem that we have seen this season is retained membranes (placentas). If unrecognised this can be a severe problem with both expensive and life threatening consequences. When the membranes are left inside the mare it provides an environment for bacteria to grow. The bacteria and associated toxins are released into the mare's blood stream making her very sick.

The membranes should come away from the mare within three hours after birth. If they are still attached after this time it is likely that they will not come away without assistance. It is important not to pull on the membranes as they may tear, and tags may be left inside the mare.

If you have a mare with membranes hanging down then tie them in a knot so the mare cannot tread on them. Call the vet if they are not free within six hours.

Sometimes when a mare foals the placenta will tear, and while it appears that it has been passed, some maybe left inside the mare. This is a serious concern as without the membranes hanging down it is hard to recognise until after the mare starts to become ill.

To avoid this, every placenta should be checked to make sure there are no bits missing. If you are not sure how to do this collect the placenta and get the vet to check it when they come out to visit the mare and foal. We recommend that all mares and foals be checked after birth to make sure that everything is okay as this is a crucial time for potential problems and early recognition makes an enormous difference.

By this time of year hopefully everyone's mares are back in foal or having a break from motherhood ready for an early start when spring kicks off next year. Most foals are now a few months old so important things to consider are weaning, vaccinations, worming,

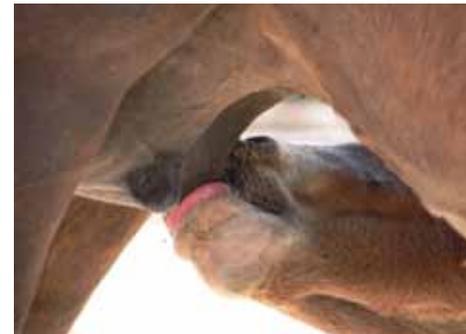
castration and micro-chipping.

Weaning usually is performed around five/six months of age and can be done in several ways. Either gradual weaning where mares and foals are mixed with other horses, possibly other mares and foals, and then the mares gradually taken away so that the foals are just left with an older dry



mare for company. The other method is to abruptly remove the foal from the mare so that it is both out of sight and sound. They will both be more distressed this way but should settle within a few days.

Following this it is important to monitor the mare for mastitis. In most cases the mare's udder will swell in the days immediately after weaning as the milk accumulates. This accumulation will suppress further milk production so the udder should return to normal. The initial over distension of the udder is often mistaken for mastitis. With over-distension the udder will usually be symmetrical with both sides being as distended, whereas mastitis usually only affects one side. Mastitis will also produce a



much harder, warmer and more painful udder. Failure to identify mastitis can have serious consequences in both the short and long term so it is therefore important to monitor the udder for at least two weeks after weaning.

The two main diseases that we vaccinate against are Tetanus and Influenza. Foals can start their initial course of vaccination for both of these diseases at five months of age as up until this point they have protection from their dams colostrum. However, because tetanus can be fatal we recommend that foals receive Tetanus anti-toxin injections from birth and repeated every six weeks until they start their vaccinations at five months of age. Influenza vaccinations can be started whenever is convenient but tetanus should be started ASAP. For more information on vaccine protocols please visit the download section of our website.

Mares should be wormed just before foaling to minimise the contamination of the new foal's environment. Also using pasture management practices, like those described in the worming fact sheet in the download section of our website, in order to limit the amount of worms on the pasture will help limit the foal's