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EQUINE NEWSLETTER

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Client talk

Dalehead Veterinary Group would like to say thank you to Professor Derek Knottenbelt for his presentation at our client talk at Giggleswick School on the 13th February 2008. Discussions on skin problems and sarcoids in the horse were particularly informative; the night was thoroughly enjoyable and a great success. We would like to thank everyone who attended for their support and Intervet and Norbrook for their sponsorship.

Rathmell Equine Clinic

Bringing your horse to us at the equine clinic is an excellent way to reduce your vet bills! Not only will you avoid the cost of a visit, but we are offering a 10% discount on all services and medication paid for at the time of the appointment. This is ideal for routine out-patient appointments for vaccinations, dentistry, weighing and health checks, but also our facilities are ideally suited to allow us to carry out rectal scans on mares for pre-breeding checks and pregnancy diagnosis, standing castrations, tendon scans and lameness examinations. We also have all the essential facilities for pre-purchase examinations, so this is an ideal venue for 2 and 5 stage vettings.



Worried about Laminitis risk?

There is a way we can quantify the laminitic risk category of your horse or pony. Blood samples sent to Liphook Veterinary Clinic are evaluated for glucose and insulin levels and relative insulin resistance the results enable high or low laminitis risk categories to be estimated. If a high risk category is detected then suitable management controls can be considered.

We feel this is especially important for heavy weight and overweight cob and native pony types.



Colic survey

From February until April this year Dalehead are participating in a study into colic which is being run by The University of Liverpool by a group at Leahurst. The study is investigating risk factors for colic and will follow cases for 1 year to monitor management and feeding practices and any recurrence of colic in that time. We hope this will provide useful information regarding risk factors for colic and their importance.

Any horses which suffer from a bout of colic during this period will be invited to join the study, provided the colic resolves without referral treatment or surgery. If you wish to participate you will be asked to complete a telephone questionnaire (10 minutes) 2-3 times over the course of a year.

Topic of the month: Equine Respiratory Problems

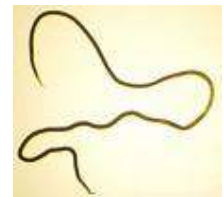
Horses and ponies can be susceptible to a number of conditions that affect the respiratory tract. The causes of these can be very varied - from infections and allergies to anatomical defects. The seriousness of the conditions also varies: some conditions will resolve without veterinary treatment but others are life threatening.



What are the main causes of respiratory disease in horses?

The main causes of respiratory problems fall in five categories:

1. **Bacterial and viral infections** - the most serious diseases that fall into this category are **equine influenza (viral)** and **strangles (bacterial)**. The nature of the bacteria and viruses means that these diseases are highly contagious and can spread very rapidly between horses.
2. **Parasitic infections** - Parasites are organisms that live on or within a host and take nourishment from that host - horses are prone to several parasites, worms being the most common. Lungworm spreads part of its lifecycle in the lungs and respiratory tract of horses and ponies and causing chronic coughing.
3. **Allergies** - The term used to describe respiratory allergy in horses is **chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)**. It may be triggered by an allergic or irritant reaction to the dust or pollen in hay and straw and results in a narrowing of the airways leading to coughing, loss of performance in competitive horses and in severe cases, wheezing and breathing difficulties. There is also a related condition called **summer pasture-associated obstructive pulmonary disease (SPAOPD)** which may be caused by pollen and is seen during the summer months.
4. **Anatomical problems** - Horses can develop physical problems within the structures of the respiratory tract (pharynx, larynx, soft palate, epiglottis, trachea) which can cause partial obstruction of the airways. This can result in abnormal respiratory noises (whistling, roaring) and impaired breathing.
5. **Exercise-induced ('bleeder')** - **Exercise-induced pulmonary haemorrhage (EIPH)** is seen primarily in racehorses but can affect any horse. After strenuous exercise, affected horses will be seen to suffer nosebleeds.



What are the signs of respiratory disease?

- Coughing when eating or starting exercise or when being mucked out.
- Nasal discharge - clear or mucus-like, becoming white or yellow like pus.
- Wheezing
- Reduced exercise tolerance
- Increased respiratory rate (normal 8-20 breaths per minute)
- Swelling of the glands in the throat larynx area (especially seen in strangles).

If there is any change in your horses breathing it is always advisable to contact your vet.