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EQUINE NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2008

Venue Change for Client Talk

Don't forget to book your seats for our client talks that will be taking place on Wednesday 22nd October at Whoop Hall, Kirkby Lonsdale and Monday 27th October at Stirk House, Gisburn at 7PM. Our medicine consultant **Rachael Conwell, BvetMed, Cert EM, MRCVS** will be talking about **colic** whilst **Catherine Speakman BvetMed, MRCVS** who recently joined our Equine team will talk about **dentistry**.

Both Talks will be kindly sponsored by Intervet, Norbrook and Merial.

Please ring the surgery on 01729 823538 to reserve your seats before 17th October.

Equine Weight Watchers Clinic

Is your horse ready to burst after a summer out on grass?

Dalehead are holding weight clinics at the equine therapy centre, booked by appointment with an equine nurse. Each weigh costs **£5.00 including vat plus a free weight watchers booklet**. If your horse is on a horse health plan, the first weighing is free of charge. A condition score of your horse will also be done and recorded.

Regular weighing would be very helpful for horses and ponies under or overweight (particularly laminitic ponies) and performance horses especially racehorses so that the optimum weight for best performance can be achieved.

Autumn special offer

Throughout September, October and November we are offering a discount on standing castrations if paid for at the time. For castrations done out at your yard or stable there will be a discount of 15% for the castration (£112.64 colt, £93.00 Shetland pony inc VAT) plus your usual visit charge but if you bring your horse into our Equine clinic at Rathmell there will be a discount of 20% for the castration (£100.13 colt and £82.67 Shetland pony) with no visit charge. Please contact the surgery on 01729 823538 if you require more information or to book your horse in for castration.

Topic of the month: Worms and worming

There are four common types of parasitic worms that can find a home in a horse's body. These worms can be harmful to the animal, making feeding at pasture a miserable experience and at the extreme end of the scale, a large worm burden can be fatal. Worming a horse throughout the year **with the correct worming product** is recommended to ensure that the worm burden is kept to a minimum. Many wormers on the market today will kill one or more species of worm.

The four common types of worms found in the horse are strongyles (redworm), tapeworms, ascarids (roundworm), and bots. The first three can infect a horse through the faeces of other horses. If a contaminated horse leaves faeces on the ground and another horses spread it around the rest of the stable or pasture, it will eventually get into the feed, grass, and water. Strongyles which predominantly seem to affect younger horses begin as larvae growing up in the arteries, gut wall and liver. As they grow they travel through the body heading for the large intestine where they will live out their lifespan. Once inside the large intestine, strongyles will feed off the digested food leaving little nutrients for the horse. This can cause several problems such as stunted growth, intestinal problems, collapsed arteries, and eventually death. By separating older horses from the young, this parasite has less chance to infect those most vulnerable.



Ascarids (Roundworm)

Large roundworm also known as ascarids are very long worms up to 40cms when mature and produce large numbers of tough coated adhesive eggs which stick to any surrounding environment. They are white in colour. The eggs have very thick shells and therefore can survive on pastures over the winter months.

Tapeworms are fairly common in horses. They too are transferred by unclean stable and pasture conditions and through faeces. Tapeworms can live for years inside the stomach lining of their host and if allowed to grow in number can cause blockage resulting in colic or eventually the death of the animal. Tapeworms can be up to twelve inches long, they prevent a horse from receiving proper nutrients from food, and cause gut inflammation leading to colic. There are many things horse breeders and owners can do to prevent the spread of tapeworms: Rotating feed to make sure it is free of faeces, cleaning out stables daily and picking pastures daily often will prevent the spread of this parasite. Since the tapeworm is the least common of all parasites, if stables and pastures are cleaned, infestation should not be a problem. Keep in mind that prevention is better than cure, getting rid of a tapeworm can be very difficult; if the head of the worm is not removed the rest of the body can grow back. Killing tapeworms with medicine takes time and the damage could already be done, so a proper prevention regime is important.



The Botfly (*Gasterophilus*) lays its eggs on the forelimbs, chest and head regions of horses between May and October which can be seen as small yellow dots in the horse's coat. Horses find the Botfly particularly annoying and this causes them to lick and bite themselves, unfortunately this action stimulates the bot eggs to hatch and the larvae then burrow into the mucous membranes of lips, gums, cheeks and tongue of the horse. Although this does not appear to cause any discomfort to the horse, the larvae incubate for 3-4 weeks before migrating to the stomach where they grow and attach themselves to the stomach wall.

Large quantities of bot eggs in the stomach can cause loss of condition, a dry coat, increased temperature, restlessness, kicking at the belly and lack of appetite. This may be accompanied with intermittent diarrhoea or constipation. The larvae can cause gastritis, stomach ulcers and in severe cases perforation of the stomach causing fatal peritonitis. The larvae remain in the stomach until the spring when they pass with the faeces, pupating on the ground to emerge as adult flies one or two months later to repeat the cycle.



Enclosed also is a copy of our **Worming Program for 2009**, this is an easy to follow guide which will tell you the correct wormer and therefore drug type to use at the right time of year. **We also have wormer packs available for 2008/09 that include all the wormers you need for one horse for a year and free worm egg count vouchers.**