

HOOK NORTON VETERINARY GROUP



White Hills Surgery, Sibford Road, Hook Norton, Banbury, OXON OX15 5DG

Tel: 01608 730085 - Fax: 01608 730439

Email: hnvs@hotmail.com - Website: www.hooknortonvets.co.uk



EQUINE NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2011

EQUINE DEPARTMENT

EXPANSION

The Equine Department has expanded recently with the arrival of Nancy Homewood and Christina Jones, bringing the practice up to five full-time equine vets, as well as Dr Alan Walker acting as a consultant and Ali Butler working with us alongside her Equine Ambulance practice.

LAMINITIS

After the recent cold weather the grass is beginning to grow again – take action now to avoid acute laminitis once it really starts to get going. Any horse or pony known to be prone to laminitis should be put on restricted grazing as soon as the spring flush begins. There are three main ways to limit grazing:-

- ❖ Limit the area of grass available

- ❖ Limit the amount of time for which horses are turned out
- ❖ Use a grazing muzzle
- ❖ Or use a combination of all three!

Use a weigh tape weekly to help you keep track of your horse's waistline – it doesn't matter which tape you use or how you use it! Just measure the same way with the same tape each week – all that really matters is the trend of the numbers. If the measurements keep going up and up, it's time for a management review! The Equine Clinic at Hook Norton has a weighbridge – weigh your horse in return for a donation to charity. Please call the Practice in advance to arrange a time.

Fatter laminitics are far more difficult to treat than slimmer horses and ponies:

fat horses are also more prone to joint problems due to the greater load placed on their legs!

SWEET ITCH – PRE-SEASON PREVENTION

Temperatures are creeping up again (oh yes they are!), so start making preparations now in advance of the midge season. Prevention is much better than trying to play catch-up with an itchy horse.

- ❖ Try to **avoid** stabling and grazing your sweet itch sufferers **near to wet areas** (rivers, ditches, ponds) and muck heaps where midges and flies are abundant.
- ❖ **Keep horses stabled at times of greatest midge activity** (dawn and dusk).

- ❖ Consider investing in a **good fly rug** such as a **Boet** – put it on as soon as it is mild enough for the midges to emerge!
- ❖ Stock up on **fly repellent** and apply it at least twice daily; some people find baby oil a useful barrier layer against midges. If your horse gets badly bitten along its belly, try **Summer Fly Cream** – very yellow but very effective!
- ❖ **Cavalesse** can help dampen the allergic response to any midge bites that do get through the defences – the active ingredient binds to the horse's white blood cells to reduce the release of histamine and so reduce the itchy response to midge bites. Cavalesse is a non-prescription supplement, so there is no need for a vet to see your horse in order to buy Cavalesse

WORMING PROGRAMMES

In late autumn and winter the larval stages of strongyles bury into the horse's gut walls – these are called encysted larvae. Encysted larvae later

emerge from the gut wall, damaging the gut wall – this frequently causes diarrhoea or colic. Weight loss may also be seen with lighter worm burdens.

To prevent disease due to larval emergence, always worm in spring against encysted strongyles, using a five day course of **Panacur Guard** or a single dose of Equest. If your horse wasn't treated for tapeworm last Autumn, use a combined product such as **Eqvalan Duo** or **Equest Pramox**.

Find worming your horse confusing? Worming packs for the whole year are available from the practice – call the Hook Norton clinic on 01608 730085 for more information.

PREPARE FOR FOALING

If you are foaling a mare this year it is worth spending a little time preparing for the big day. Make sure you have a large clean stable with a deep straw bed available for the mare to foal in – most mares foal at night, so start bringing the mare in overnight a month before her due date.

A month before foaling is also when the mare's 'flu and Tetanus vaccinations should be boosted – that way the antibodies she produces will be transferred to the newborn foal in the

colostrum, giving it some protection against 'flu and tetanus before it can have its own vaccinations at the age of 5-6 months. Get together a foaling kit :- clean bucket, towels, lambs feeding bottle, jug, Hibiscrub and 'blue spray' or iodine. A useful website with good advice and information for first-time foalings is:

<http://www.vet.cam.ac.uk/hospital-new/eqpn.html>.

The Donkey Sanctuary also has an advice page with helpful information about foaling donkeys at:

<http://www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk/files/donkeys/Foaling.pdf>.

For more advice about foaling your mare please call the Practice to speak to an equine vet.

VACCINATIONS FOR EVENTING UNDER F.E.I. RULES

If you are planning to compete under F.E.I. rules this year, don't forget to get your horse vaccinated against equine 'flu to comply with F.E.I. rules.

Horses at F.E.I. competitions must have had a primary course of vaccinations (three vaccinations), annual boosters (each within 365 days of the last annual booster) and an additional booster within 6 months of the F.E.I. competition entered for.

Remember that horses cannot compete within 7 days of the most recent vaccination, so get organised now in order to avoid missing events early in the season.