Hook Norton Veterinary Group

FEBRUARY EQUINE NEWSLETTER

MITES, MUD FEVER & MORE

In the cold season, we deal with a variety of skin conditions often affecting the lower limbs of horses.

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Do you vaccinate your horse?

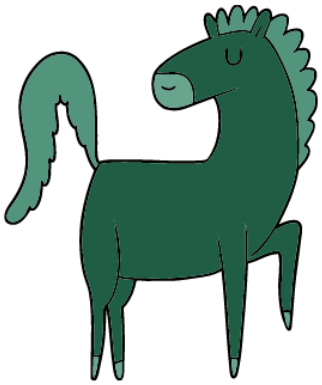
Do you worm your horse?

Do you have your horse's teeth checked & rasped if neccessary?

Do you want to save money on your preventative equine care?

You can save money on all these things and more by joining our Healthy Horse Club. We recognise and understand how important it is to spot and treat disease in its early stages. Making the inclusive 6-monthly vaccinations, regular 6-monthly dentals, foot balance radiographs and worming plan invaluable.

- » FOC Zone Visits
- » Annual Vaccination
- » 6-month booster Vaccination
- » Dentals with routine rasping,
  including sedation if required every 6 months (2x per year)
- » Foot Balance radiographs, 1 pair yearly
- » Worming programme, including:
  3 faecal WECs,
  Equisal tapeworm test,
  winter wormer, &
  worming advice
- » Free use of equine weighbridge
- » Text reminders to book vaccinations & dental appointments,
  & for worming & WECS
- » 5% discount off HNVG branded equine supplement range



Contact us or visit our website for more information.
T: 01608 730085

VIRTUAL CLIENT EVENINGS

Thank you to everyone that signed up to the recent Virtual Client Evening, There were 77 registrations from Hook Norton, and we hope you all enjoyed the evening with Gillian.

Tuesday 15th February:
Preparing your Mare for Breeding with James Crabtree BVM&S CertEM(StudMed) MRCVS.

Wednesday 16th March:
Understanding your Horse's Behaviour with Gemma Pearson BVMS Cert AVP (EM) MScR CCAB MRCVS

SIGN UP FOR THE NEXT ONE BELOW!

Preparing your Mare for Breeding

Breeding your own foal from a beloved mare can be immensely rewarding, but remember that it is a long-term project requiring a lot of commitment.

Whether you are thinking about breeding or maybe you have already decided, join us on Tue 15th Feb at 7.30pm to learn more about 'Preparing your mare for breeding'.

Dr. James Crabtree is joining us, who often speaks on a national and international stage, sharing his vast experience and expertise with vets and horse owners alike.

Tue 15th February 2022 at 7.30pm
FREE for clients to attend
Click here to register.

WHAT IS MUD FEVER?

Mud fever is a skin condition that commonly affects the pastern region. Wet, damp conditions can cause the skin to soften and crack, allowing the bacteria, Dermatophilus congolensis (from the ground) to penetrate the natural skin barrier. The result is sore, inflamed skin and oozing lesions, which develop into crusty scabs.

Involved limbs can become warm, swollen and painful. Any horse can suffer from mud fever, wet and muddy fields increase the likelihood of occurrence, and white-haired areas seem to be more prone to developing mud fever.

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

Mud fever has a typical appearance, and diagnosis is usually made by clinical examination. Treatment can involve the following:

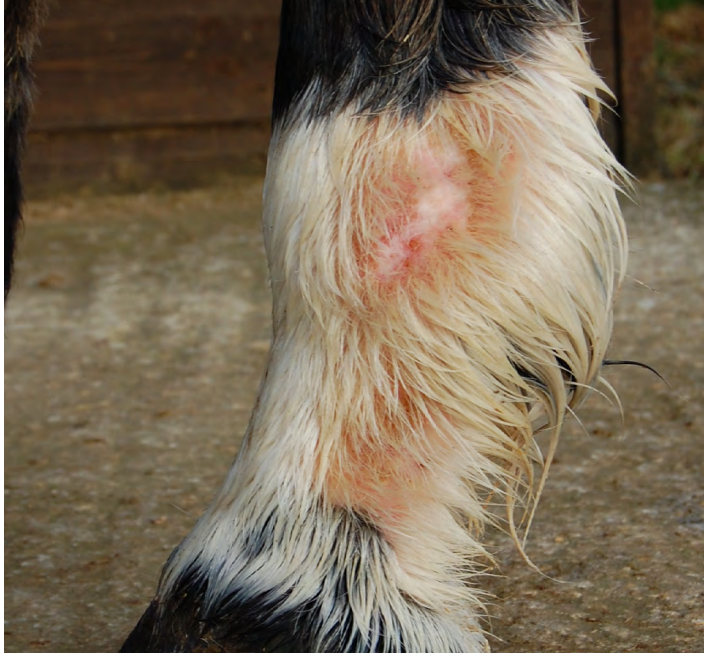
» Removing the horse from wet, muddy conditions.

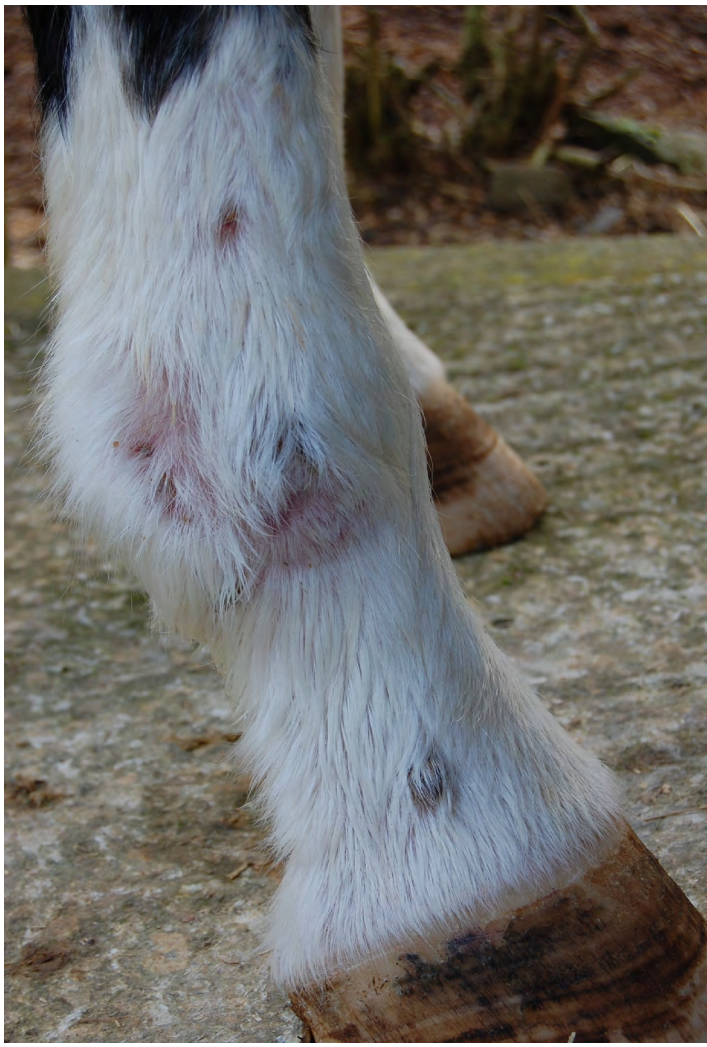
» Cleaning the legs with very dilute Hibiscrub (1:50 hibi:water) to soften the scabs and allow gentle removal (if your horse is heavily feathered, clipping will facilitate treatment). Ideally, this should be done once to reduce the number of times the skin gets wet.

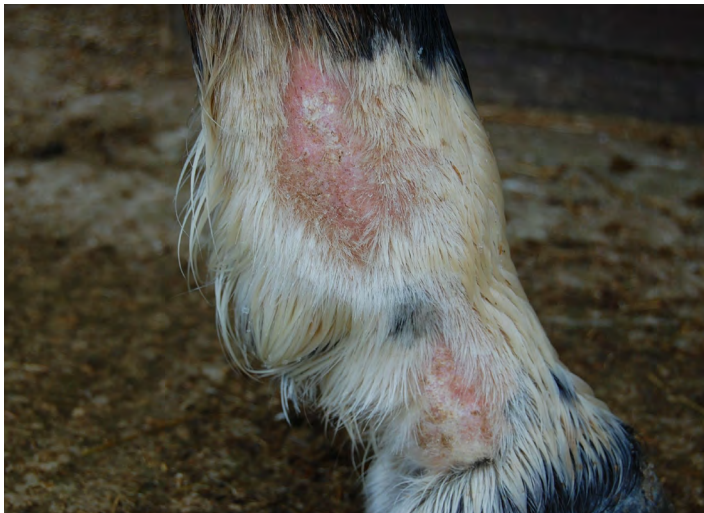
» Drying the affected areas and applying creams. Various topical creams exist on the market that work as either treatment or preventative (barrier) care. We occasionally treat horses that are refractory to treatment with a topical cream containing an antibiotic and a steroid with good effect.

» Systemic treatment is rarely needed but can include pain relief and antibiotics.

As always – prevention is better than cure! Good pasture management or stabling horses for a certain amount of time can help keep their legs dry. Avoid washing your horse's limbs repeatedly, instead leave the mud to dry and use a brush to remove it. Regular examinations for lesions and early recognition are key.







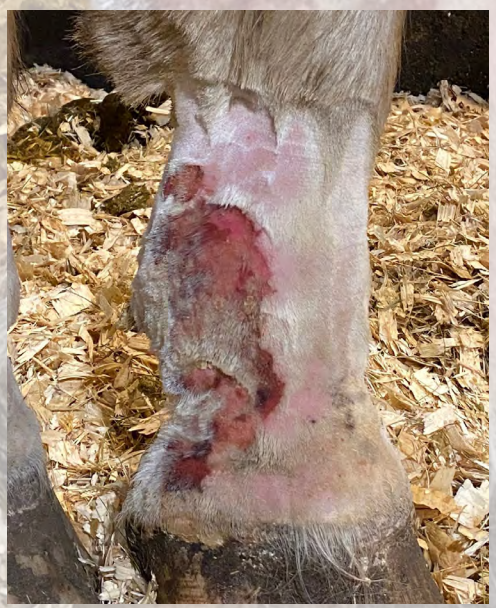
Pastern leukocytoclastic vasculitis seems to be an immune-mediated disease, which can be aggravated by strong sunlight.

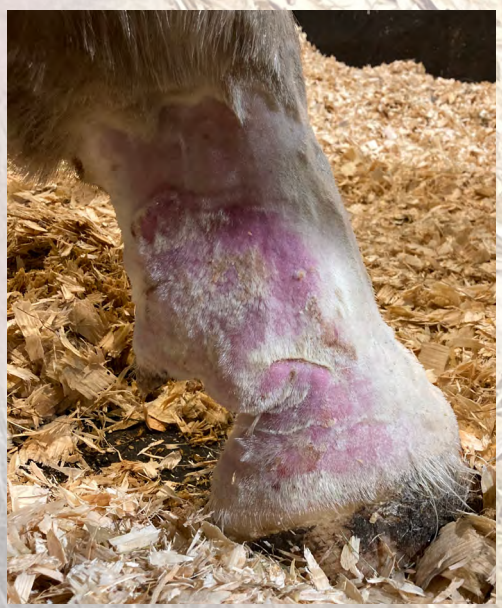
EQUINE PASTERN VASCULITIS

Pastern leukocytoclastic vasculitis is a much less common type of dermatitis that usually only affects white-haired parts of the limbs. It can present very similar to mud fever, but the typically circular lesions can reach the cannon region, and scabs and crusts are more difficult to remove. In addition, this condition is more common in the summer.

Vasculitis is inflammation of blood vessel walls. We do not know much about pastern vasculitis yet, but it seems to be an immune-mediated disease, which can be aggravated by strong sunlight.

Treatment is similar to treatment of mud fever but can be much trickier and more time-consuming. It involves clipping of hair, softening and removing the scabs and topical application of steroid creams. Horses should be kept in a stable and out of sunlight until the lesions are healed.





MITES

Chorioptic mange, itchy heels, feather mite; there are many names for one condition often affecting the lower limbs of heavily feathered horses.

WHAT ARE MITES?

The culprit is Chorioptes equi. These mites are about 0.3 mm in size and not visible to the naked eye; they live on the skin surface and cause pain and pruritus (itchiness) by crawling and feeding on skin debris. The signs of mites include the horse stamping its feet, itching, and biting or rubbing its legs. The mites can also cause sore spots and crusts, which can be easily mistaken for mud fever.

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

Skin scrapes or hair plucks can aid in diagnosing chorioptic mange, but often the diagnosis is made by observing the typical clinical signs. Although nicely groomed feathery legs are a beautiful sight, those feathers also provide the ideal environment for mites to live in, and clipping greatly aids treatment. In some cases, sedation needs to be administered to allow initial handling as the horses' limbs can be quite sore to touch.

There are no licensed treatments for feather mites in horses in the UK, and unfortunately, the options are endless. Treatment can involve the following:

» Topical shampoos or washes (selenium sulphide, pig oil and lime sulphur)
» Topical application of antiparasitics (Frontline Spray, Switch)
» Two injections of Doramectin 10-14 days apart – resistances to this drug are on the rise, and Doramectin is harmful to the environment, so we aim for responsible use.

Chorioptic mites have a life cycle that lasts 2-3 weeks. Regardless of which treatment option you choose, it is imperative to repeat the treatment at certain intervals to ensure the removal of the adult mites and any eggs that hatch after. Mites can live in the environment for up to 70 days. Removing all bedding, cleaning grooming equipment and disinfecting the stable is as important as treating the mites living on the horse itself!

MALLENDERS & SALLENDERS

Owners of draft breeds or cobs might be familiar with these terms. Also known as 'cob knees' they describe hyperkeratosis at the back of the knees (mallenders) or at the front of the hocks (sallenders). The overproduction of keratin leads to thickening of the skin and the development of scabs and scales. The skin can crack, becoming irritating and painful to the horse and may even lead to lameness.

There is no cure for these conditions, but they can be managed. Treatment might include:

» Washing affected areas with keratolytic shampoos
» Aqueous cream or other emollients to soften and remove scabs
» Inflamed skin areas can be treated with a topical antibacterial cream.

Keeping the affected limbs clean and dry helps prevent a secondary bacterial or fungal infection. Frequent application of moisturising creams will aid with management.