



Summer is here at last! Thank goodness for that. Actually Summer has been and gone. Apparently last Thursday **was** Summer. We are now back to Winter. Talking of Winter, would you believe it if I told you that the temperature during December & January was actually a degree or so *above* the average for that time of year? I didn't believe it either!

So what's happening this season? Well laminitis has been rearing its ugly head again. Best advice I can give is don't let your horse get fat! If it's getting fat, its important to restrict the feeding by any means possible. Those with native breeds need to be particularly vigilant.

Foals are have been splashing down all around, all without serious problem so far! Remember that we have a reproductive department here at the Bush, so if you fancy breeding your mare then give me a call. Doesn't matter if you want to use fresh or frozen semen, we can do it all. We can even collect embryos for you.

Finally, make sure you come to our next client evening on the 30th June. Its all above horse learning. Can't wait, its going to be a real stonker! Take care and see you all soon.

*Matt Hanks - Editor*

**Dick Vet Exotic Animal and  
Wildlife service**

The Exotic Animal and Wildlife service offers first opinion services for all exotic animals from a wide catchment area.

There is also a dedicated rabbit clinic to offer the very best care for your pet.

The clinical team are happy to answer any queries from exotic animal owners in their catchment area, should advice be required prior to a visit to the dick vet. They also hold a number of client evenings where advice on care can be sought. For more information Give them a call on 0131 650 7650

**After Hours Emergency  
Number  
01223 849835  
Stick it in your phone  
today!**

**Normal hours phone  
0131 4454468**

**What's in this season's  
newsletter:**

1. Client evening
2. News and comment
3. Sarcoids

**Practice Staff**

**Veterinary Surgeons:**

**Jenny Clements** BVSc MSc Cert EIM  
MRCVS

**Matt Hanks** BVSc MRCVS

**Malcolm Corsar** BVM&S MRCVS

**Gemma Pearson** BVM&S MRCVS

**Front Office Staff**

Alison Smith

Trish O'Donnell

**Opening Hours**

Monday to Friday: 9-5pm

During these times phone:

0131 445 4468

After hours phone:

01223 849835



The Dick Vet Equine Practice is a Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons accredited Practice.

**Client Evening -**

**7pm 30th June 2001 at the Bush -  
*Horse Behaviour and Learning***

Our client evenings are proving very popular!! Our latest is bound to appeal to everyone with a horse. We will have nibbles at 7pm.

If you would like to reserve a place then give Ali or Trish a call on 0131 445 4468



### The use of 'Bute' in competitions

After a year of discussion and consultation with experts, the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) has voted unanimously to prohibit the use of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as phenylbutazone (bute) and flunixin meglumine in international competition. Salicylic acid has also been banned for use during events.

By reducing pain, NSAIDs can allow injured horses to continue to perform, possibly making their condition worse and ultimately causing more suffering. Those who oppose the ruling say that NSAIDs can be used for treatment of inflammation, and are therefore therapeutic and should be allowed in horses that are competing. NSAIDs used legally for this purpose before competitions but discontinued prior to the next competition can be traced in blood and urine, and the FEI is pursuing efforts to provide data showing how long before a competition to discontinue use of these medications

### Equine Strangles vaccine returns!

Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal Health, the European market leader in equine vaccines, is pleased to announce that it is re-introducing Equilis StrepE, the only strangles vaccine for horses in Europe. This vaccine was withdrawn from the market in 2007 for stability reasons. This issue has now been resolved and we look forward to resuming our support for strangles management programmes.

Equilis StrepE is administered through a submucosal injection in the upper lip of the horse and provides immunity for three months following two initial injections, four weeks apart. The vaccine significantly reduces clinical signs of strangles and occurrence of lymph node abscesses in horses that are at risk of infection.

The primary course is two vaccinations about a month apart followed by a booster either every 6 months (which means the horse is primed for another vaccination in the event of an outbreak) or every 3 months giving maximum protection.

For more information call one of the vets on 0131 4454468

### Paying for treatment – who is responsible ?

Like all veterinary practices, the Dick Vet Equine Practice relies upon prompt settlement of bills, not only to allow us to invest in excellent staff and equipment but for our very existence.

In general this isn't a problem for DVEP clients but please be aware that any issues over our fees can be addressed directly to Ronnie Soutar, Director of Veterinary Services, who will do his best to sort out problems or explain our policies.

One issue we do run into from time to time involves horses at livery or on loan, lease or shared. Particularly in emergencies, we may be called out by someone who is not the owner – and later find the owner is unwilling to pay !

In such cases we are guided by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, which states "a client is the person who requests veterinary attention for an animal". This means that, in the case of disputes, we will hold the person who called us out legally responsible for settlement of our account.

We therefore strongly advise livery yard owners, anyone who loans out their horse or any owner who feels this situation may arise to have a signed contract clearly stating who has responsibility for vet fees. Examples of such Agreements can be downloaded free from the BHS website.

We also really appreciate it when you let us know that you no longer own or have responsibility for a particular horse, so that we can update our records. And if you're taking on a new horse, let us know beforehand and we'll be very happy to give advice on any issues, carry out pre-purchase examination (vetting) or just share your excitement !

### Faecal Worm Egg Counting

We have been advocating the use of faecal worm egg counts as a way of monitoring your horses parasite burden for some time now and it has proved very popular. All you need to do is drop off a small sample of very fresh dung into the practice and we will do the rest. You will get a phone call with the results and advice as to whether or not your horse needs to be wormed at that time. A small request from us though is to call us before you bring in 3 or more samples so we can set aside some time to do them.



If you would like more information or would like to let us know that you are bringing in several samples for us to examine then call us on 0131 4454468.



## SARCOIDS

Sarcoids are commonly occurring equine skin tumours that have been affecting horses and causing anguish for their owners for centuries. Although common, sarcoids vary greatly in their size and appearance, the nature in which they grow and potentially spread and the way they respond to treatment. It is this variability that makes sarcoids such a challenge for both owners and veterinarians.

### Some Important Sarcoid Facts

- Sarcoids are common; geldings appear more frequently affected.
- All equid species are susceptible - even donkeys and zebras.
- Although sarcoids are a type of tumour (cancer) they do not metastasise (spread to internal organs).
- Once a sarcoid horse, always a sarcoid horse! A horse with one sarcoid is likely to develop more.
- Sarcoids can develop anywhere on the horse's skin, but more common sites include the chest, groin, sheath and face (especially around the eyes and mouth).
- Sarcoids are likely to recur, regardless of treatment.
- Trauma of any nature to a sarcoid is likely to aggravate it.
- No two sarcoids are the same; each sarcoid needs to be assessed on an individual basis.
- Sarcoids can be unpredictable in all aspects of their development and treatment.
- There is no 'magic cure' for sarcoids.

### Types of Sarcoids

There are 6 broad classifications for equine sarcoids; *occult*, *verrucous* (warty), *nodular*, *fibroblastic*, *mixed* and *malevolent*. It must be remembered that no two sarcoids are the same and sarcoids definitely don't read the text book, so many individual tumors may contain characteristics of several different types.

#### Occult Sarcoids

Occult sarcoids appear as roughly circular hairless areas of skin. They often are quite subtle early in their development and sometimes difficult to recognise.

#### Verrucous Sarcoids

Verrucous sarcoids are 'wart-like' in their appearance (Fig. 1) and are often greyish in colour. They can appear singularly or in groups that merge into larger lesions.



**Fig. 1:** Verrucous (wart-like) sarcoid on the chest of a horse.

#### Nodular Sarcoids

Nodular sarcoids are firm, round nodules that are often seen in the armpit, on the inside edge of the thigh and groin as well as under the skin of the eyelids. Nodular sarcoids are usually covered by a layer of normal skin but can also be ulcerative. They are usually firmly attached to the skin overlying them but sometimes they are freely moveable under the surface.

#### Fibroblastic Sarcoids

Fibroblastic sarcoids are fleshy masses that grow quickly, bleed easily and often have ulcerated surfaces. They look very like exuberant granulation tissue ('proud flesh') and in fact, can develop at the site of a wound. They can be found anywhere on the horse's body and can develop rapidly from other types of sarcoids.



**Fig. 2:** Malevolent sarcoid showing ulcerated nodular and verrucous type sarcoids. A large part of this horse's body was covered in sarcoids.

#### Malevolent (or malignant) Sarcoids

The malevolent sarcoid (fig 2) is the most aggressive of all the sarcoid types. It can rapidly spread over a wide area of the horse's body and grows in size just as quickly. The most likely appearance of the malevolent sarcoid is that of ulcerative nodular-like lesions group in large bundles.

#### Mixed Sarcoids

The term 'mixed sarcoid' is somewhat of a sub-classification describing a lesion that shows qualities of two or more different sarcoid groups. Sarcoids are commonly described as 'mixed' as a lot of sarcoid lesions will demonstrate characteristics of more than one type.



### **Sarcoid Treatment**

Unfortunately there isn't a magical cure-all treatment for sarcoids. Apparently, there are over 40 different sarcoid treatments worldwide which clearly demonstrates that there is no one single method that will be effective in each and every case!

Each and every sarcoid is different; they are unpredictable by nature and no matter how similar two sarcoids look, a treatment that works for one might not work for another. It is extremely important to remember that each sarcoid needs to be assessed by a veterinarian on an individual basis before any treatment is started. Inappropriate treatment can easily convert a simple sarcoid into something very nasty, very quickly.

#### **Benign Neglect**

Sometimes your veterinarian will advise you to just monitor a small sarcoid that has recently developed. Some sarcoids may stay very small without further development for years, so occasionally benign neglect is the treatment of choice. Of course, if the sarcoid starts to grow your veterinarian is likely to recommend an alternative treatment strategy.

#### **Surgical Removal**

Surgical removal can be effective for small sarcoids in safe areas but the failure rate is relatively high. Nodular sarcoids often respond favourably to surgical removal which may be done under sedation and local anaesthetic in the field, or might need to be performed under general anaesthesia.

#### **AW4-LUDES (Liverpool) Sarcoid Cream**

AW4-LUDES cream, often simply known as 'Liverpool sarcoid cream' or as 'Knottenbelt's sarcoid cream' (after its creator Derek Knottenbelt from Liverpool University Vet School), is a topical chemotherapy treatment. The cream is only available via special veterinary prescription from the University of Liverpool. The cytotoxic nature of the cream makes it quite dangerous to use; as such only veterinarians are permitted to apply the product.

#### **Cryosurgery**

The use of liquid nitrogen to freeze a sarcoid can be used for selective cases. Cryosurgery involves rapidly freezing and then slowly thawing tissues in order to kill the rapidly dividing tumour cells whilst sparing the normal cells.

#### **Intra-lesional Cisplatin**

Cisplatin is a chemotherapy drug that has shown good results when injected directly into sarcoids. As cisplatin is a toxic drug, care must be taken when injecting into the sarcoid.

#### **Imiquimod (Aldara)**

Imiquimod (Aldara cream) is an immune response modifier with potent antiviral and antitumour activity that is used for treatment of skin cancer and genital warts in humans. It has recently been used for treating sarcoids in horses and has shown good results although it is prolonged treatment compared to other treatments. It may take 2-4 months of treatment to see a decrease in tumour size and so this is not a quick option.

#### **BCG Injection**

This method works reasonably well for nodular and fibroblastic lesions around the eyes but is much less effective elsewhere and should not be used for sarcoids on the limbs as these often become much worse for some unknown reason! The method has significant risks and careful supportive medication is required at the time of each injection. The risks relate to the chance that the horse will react adversely to the protein in the injection.

***As you can see, sarcoid treatment is not easy! If you think your horse has a sarcoid, or would like to discuss possible treatment options of your horse's sarcoids, please call the practice on 0131 445 4468 and ask to speak to one of our vets.***

Normal opening hours are:

Monday to Friday 9am-5pm

During these times please phone:

**0131 445 4468**

At all other times please phone:

**01223 849835**

If you call during after hours, you will be asked for 'your message'. Please give your name, contact details and the nature of the problem. This information will be passed to the duty

