



'Bute' allowed in competition horses! or not?

Ever since Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI) president, Princess Haya, made the decision to allow horses to compete after being given painkillers (such as Bute) the horse community has been abuzz. Before this proposed change in policy, the FEI had a zero tolerance policy on drugs in sport. One voice is that of Hugh Thomas, director of the Badminton Horse Trials. He has urged Princess Haya to 'do whatever is necessary to change or suspend the decision'. He let his opinion be known in an open letter, further adding that the Badminton Horse Trials are committed to running the event 'in the spirit of clean sport'. Leading endurance vet, Dr Fred Barrelet said in a letter from him and 19 of his colleagues, that the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDS) could cause 'catastrophic breakdown' in the endurance horse. The British Equine Veterinary association (BEVA) also waded into the discussion saying that the use of NSAIDS in a 'retrograde step for horse welfare'. But it seems the FEI has been listening to all of this press because the FEI has done an about turn and postponed the new rule until it can be discussed at the 2010 general assembly.

For more information go to:
www.fei.org

Recommend a Friend and get 50% off your next visit!!!

If you know someone looking to have their horses' health looked after by the professionals, then get them to give us a call, mention your name and you will get 50% off your next visit fee! It's as easy as that!

Only applies to routine visit fees. After-hours visit fees are not included in this offer

What did you promise your horse this year for Christmas? A microchip? A tooth rasp? A vaccination perhaps? Well how about a health plan? We now offer a great new way to look after the health needs of your horse. See the back page for more information.

Our client evening was a great success. A good turnout and good talks from Malcolm and Matt. Malcolm spoke about our health plans and Matt gave a brief talk about mechanisms of disease and possible diseases of the future (hope he was wrong!).

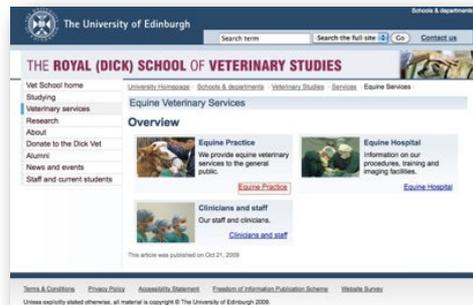
The big news of the season (along with the snow) is that Jenny Clements has returned from maternity leave. Ready and eager to get back into equine practice!

Unfortunately the snow may not have had much effect on worm egg numbers on the pasture, but at least your horses were unlikely to have acquired worms while the snow persisted. You see! There is a silver lining to all this cold weather.

Other news

We have recently launched our new website. This new site is easier to navigate and has useful links to newsletters and facts sheets for you to download. There are also links to the Dick Vet Equine Hospital so you can check out why it pays to be registered with the Dick Vet Equine Practice!

Go to www.dickvetequine.com and follow the links to the Equine Practice.



Reduced referral fees to Dick Vet Equine Hospital!



Not content in offering you reduced referral fees for emergency referrals to our hospital, we can now offer you REDUCED consultation fees for referrals from the Dick Vet Equine Practice. So if your horse is in need of specialist care it is now cheaper than ever!

What's in this month's newsletter:

1. News
2. Eye injuries
3. Worming your horse
4. Health Plans

Practice Staff

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Opening Hours

Monday to Friday: 9-5pm

During these times phone:

0131 445 4468

After hours phone:

01223 849 835



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



Eye Disease in the Horse

Scratching or damage to the surface of the cornea, perhaps from a branch immediately causes intense pain. A horse will respond by tightly closing its eyelids and producing excessive tears that may run down the face. The horse will avoid bright light e.g. by standing at the back of the stable and depending on what caused the injury, and how long ago it occurred, the eyelids and conjunctiva may be swollen, bruised and inflamed. No attempt should be made to force the eyelids open.

The horse should be moved to a dark stable and prevented from rubbing the eye. Veterinary attention should be sought immediately. If left untreated, bacteria will rapidly infect the damaged cornea resulting in the formation of a corneal ulcer (Fig. 1).

Ulcers can rapidly get deeper and at their worst cause rupture of the cornea. Direct trauma as well as infection and ulceration of the cornea can result in severe inflammation of the whole front part of the eye, including the iris, (*anterior uveitis*). This results in the front of the eye taking on a discoloured appearance and constriction of the pupil and is an extremely painful and serious condition.



Fig 1, showing an eye with a green stained ulcer

Examination of the Painful Eye

Usually a horse with a painful eye will be very reluctant to have it examined. Frequently a veterinary surgeon will need to sedate the horse and put some topical local anaesthetic drops in the eye to allow a full examination. Nerve blocks may also be required to relax the eyelids and allow inspection of the eye.

Once the eye can be examined, the external eyelids and the third eyelid are searched for signs of injury and for any foreign bodies that could be trapped behind them. The surface of the cornea is examined for injury which usually involves use of a dye, called fluorescein, to show up any damage to the cornea. The fluorescent green dye only stains parts of the cornea that are damaged.

The deeper structures of the eye will be also examined as far as possible, but in some cases the pupil will be tightly constricted due to pain, which decreases examination of the deeper structures.

Treatment of the Painful Eye

The treatment required will depend on the extent and cause of the problem.

Firstly anti-inflammatory drugs may be given to reduce inflammation and provide pain relief. Atropine eye drops may be used to dilate the pupil; this provides pain relief and keeps the edges of the iris out of the way. If the pupil remains constricted, the inflammation in the anterior chamber could cause the iris to become stuck to other parts of the eye.

Antibiotic eye drops or ointment will usually be required to fight any infection. These will need to be administered at regular and often frequent intervals. If your horse refuses to let you place drops or ointment into its eye you must inform your vet. Over time, depending on the extent of the injury, you may see blood vessels slowly migrate across the cornea to aid healing. It can take weeks and even months for corneal damage to completely resolve.

If you wish to discuss the appearance of your horse's eye or book an appointment for a visit, please phone the Dick Vet Equine Practice on 0131 445 4468.

Horse Diary January/February

SNEC (www.sneec.co.uk for more information)

- 01/02/2010 - Linda Lucey Clinic
- 03/02/2010 - Show Jumping Schooling Night
- 04/02/2010 - L & S Pony Club
- 06/02/2010 - Affiliated & Unaffiliated Dressage
- 07/02/2010 - Glenbrae Riding Club
- 08/02/2010 - Dressage Training with P. Beattie
- 13 & 14/02/2010 - BSJA Juniors
- 15/02/2010 - Andrew Hamilton Training Clinic
- 16/02/2010 - React Training Clinic
- 17/02/2010 - Show Jumping Schooling Night
- 18/02/2010 - L & S Pony Club
- 20/02/2010 - SNEC Unaffiliated Dressage
- 21/02/2010 - BSPS
- 22/02/2010 - David Gatherer Training Clinic
- 23/02/2010 - BHS CPD Day
- 24/02/2010 - Show Jumping Schooling Night
- 25/02/2010 - L & S Pony Club
- 27 & 28/02/2010 - BSJA Seniors
- 01/03/2010 - SNEC Riding Lessons
- 01/03/2010 - Dressage training with P. Beattie
- 03/03/2010 - Show Jumping Schooling Night
- 04/03/2010 - L & S Pony Club
- 06 & 07/03/2010 - BSJA Juniors
- 08/03/2010 - Andrew Hamilton Training Clinic
- 08/03/2010 - SNEC Riding Lessons

This information is intended as a guide only - please contact venue for more information



What is the Best Worming Protocol?

Over the last decade drug resistance has been reported, particularly in cyathostomin (small red worms) populations, despite use of an increasing number of worming treatment. This is worrying as there are no new drugs in the pipeline if worms become resistant to all the currently available drugs. There are several different ways which horses can be de-wormed, each with pros and cons:

1. Interval Dosing

'Interval dosing', which many horse owners / yard managers use, and is promoted by drug companies, involves regular wormer administration based on the egg reappearance periods after treatment with wormer; e.g. dosing with moxidectin (Equest) every 13 weeks as this is how long it takes for eggs to reappear in the manure after treating with moxidectin. It is important to realise if using this method that the egg reappearance time differs for each wormer drug; moxidectin 13 weeks, ivermectin 8 weeks, pyrantel 6-8 weeks and fenbendazole 4-6 weeks.

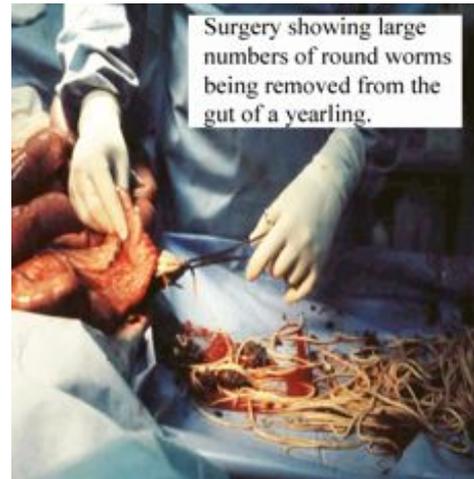
This is an 'easy' protocol to follow; however this regimen will result in the routine worming of many horses that do not need it as studies have shown that in any given population, 80% of worms are carried by only 20% of horses.



Red worms in the gut

2. Strategic Dosing

This protocol involves worming horses at key times when parasite burdens are thought to be highest e.g. treatment of encysted cyathostomins in winter. Although this provides a more rational approach, problems can arise when abnormal patterns of weather lead to early or late peak pasture counts or when heavily infected animals are added to the population.



Surgery showing large numbers of round worms being removed from the gut of a yearling.

3. Targeted Strategic Treatment

This protocol adapts the strategic dosing programme to administer wormers at the most appropriate times of the year, based on the life cycle and environmental factors involved (e.g. pasture management), and also takes into account the levels of infection in individual horses by monitoring individual faecal worm egg counts (FEC). This means that each property has its own individual treatment plan according to the horses and factors relevant on that particular property. Regular FEC are used to identify the horses most susceptible to worms and that are contaminating the pasture. These horses are de-wormed whilst the other horses are left untreated to reduce the use of worming drugs (and therefore the likelihood of resistance) on the property. This type of programme is typically associated with a substantial (>50%) reduction in the total amount of wormers used on a farm.

If using this programme it is important to remember that FEC only detect adult worms and therefore a larvicidal product should be used in all grazing horses, once per year, regardless of FEC results. Likewise, horses should be treated once per year for tapeworms (remember these can be combined using a combination wormer if desired).

Management Practices

An essential part of all worm control programmes is to ensure that drug treatments are combined with good management to minimise infection levels and consequently reduce reliance on drugs:

1. Do not overstock
2. Remove faeces regularly from pasture (twice weekly) preferably by hand (sorry).
3. Give wormer doses based on the weight of each animal
4. Quarantine newcomers for 48h and treated with moxidectin (preferably combined with praziquantel for tapeworms).
5. Co-grazing with sheep or cattle reduces pasture contamination
6. Harrowing in the *summer* (not winter!) can also be used to limit pasture contamination

If you have any queries regarding worming your horse or wish to set up a targeted strategic worming programme, call us at the Dick Vet Equine Practice on 0131 445 4468



Health Plan Scheme - what do you get?

- An **annual visit** - includes a full and detailed clinical examination of your horse, where we will examine your horse from nose to tail (including a trot up), examine your horse's stabling and environment, and discuss our findings and any particular areas of concern which you may have regarding your horse's health and general well being.
- A typed **health plan**, specific to your horse will then be produced for you, detailing all aspects pertinent to the care of your horse, providing you with customised "ready to hand" veterinary guidelines and advice to maximise the health and wellbeing of your horse. A copy of this health plan will be retained at the practice for our reference.



- **Annual review** of the health plan, to help safeguard your horse's health and wellbeing.
- **Vaccination** and advice on what the best vaccinations are for your horse, helping to maximise immunity specific for your horses' needs.
- **Free** worm egg counts, worming advice and the provision of the most appropriate wormer for your horse to help prevent costly, unnecessary over worming and also help protect against harmful worms becoming resistant to wormers.
- **Dental examination** providing you with a record of your horses' dental care.

Together, these services constitute a real saving when taken as part of the health scheme.

The total all inclusive cost of the health scheme will be £120 (+VAT) per annum. This price constitutes a minimum 20% discount if these services were used individually.

Although the health plan will help prevent against many common conditions and diseases which may affect your horse, it will not include the cost of an emergency visit, should one be required. However, the theory is that health planning, which will allow for more routine veterinary involvement, will help to prevent some of these distressing emergency situations from arising, hopefully meaning a happy healthy horse. Why not call today by using the number shown below.

See you in the Spring

Normal opening hours are:

Monday to Friday 8.30am-5pm

During these times please phone:

0131 445 4468

At all other times please phone:

01223 849 835

If you call during after hours, you will be asked for your name, contact details and the nature of the problem.

This information will be passed to the duty vet who will contact you directly.



www.dickvetequine.com