

ST DAVID'S EQUINE

VETERINARY SURGEONS

NEWSLETTER

KEEPING IN TOUCH
MAY 2010

SUMMER ALLERGIES

A NEW NATURAL TREATMENT FOR SWEET ITCH

SUMMER ALLERGIES ARE A COMMON CAUSE OF SKIN DISEASE IN THE SPRING AND SUMMER MONTHS, PARTICULARLY IN PONIES AND COBS.

The signs can range from mild itching and loss of hair of the mane and tail to severe self trauma caused by frenzied rubbing. The commonest cause of such signs is the saliva of biting midges (causing the classic signs of sweetitch), but allergies to the stings and bites of other insects and to nettle stings can also be involved.

Many of these allergies involve a particular type of allergic response called a "Type 1 Hypersensitivity". This type of allergy occurs when a chemical called histamine is released from cells called mast cells.

Management of these allergies can be difficult and no one treatment is usually effective so often a number of measures are required to be used to control the symptoms. Some of the measures used are:

- Full body blankets
- Reduced time outdoors, particularly at dawn and dusk when the midges tend to be most active
- Insect repellants and insecticides
- Movement of the horse to a site where midges are less prevalent (usually a site where there is more wind).
- Drug treatments such as steroids, antihistamines and skin creams.



Recently a new preventative treatment has become available called "Cavalesse". It is supplied as a sachet that is dissolved in water (to be given daily by mouth) and a gel (to be



applied directly to affected areas). One packet of **Cavalesse** provides treatment for up to 3 months.

Cavalesse is a natural food supplement containing a specialised formulation of water-soluble vitamins and minerals, including nicotinamide. Once a month the contents of each sachet are simply dissolved in water to form an oral solution, which can be administered daily via a special pipette, either by sprinkling over a small handful of feed or adding to a treat such as a sugar lump. The supplement inhibits the release of histamine from mast cells and reduces the inflammatory response in the skin. As a result the symptoms of sweet itch are controlled.

Cavalesse is a new product and has undergone initial testing with encouraging results. Larger trials are now in progress. One important feature of the use of the product has been found to be that, since it is a preventative treatment, treatment should ideally start early in the year before sweet itch symptoms start. Starting treatment later in the year, when symptoms are already established, has been found to be less successful.

Please contact St Davids Equine for further treatment information on 01392 876622



REDUCE VACCINATION PRICES!

REDUCED PRICES FOR VACCINATION OF MULTIPLE HORSES!

For some time now we have run a successful scheme whereby clients receive a reduced price for vaccinating their horse if they group together with others on the same yard or in a similar geographical region who are also having their horses vaccinated. Up until now the reduced prices were only available when we vaccinated a total of 5 horses in a group.

From May we will be extending this scheme for



a trial period. Owners will now receive preferential prices if they can form a group of 3 or more horses in the same area for vaccination. There will be a further reduction if the vaccinated group contains 5 or more horses. We will run this extended scheme initially for a period of 3 months to assess whether this is a service that our clients use. If it is successful we intend to extend the scheme.

We hope that the scheme will allow us to regionalise our calls to some extent and thus allow us to be more efficient. We are happy to pass the resultant saving on to our clients.

If your horse is due a vaccination in the near future, please take advantage of this offer by trying to club together with other horse owners in your area so that you can all save money.

ULCERS - BE AWARE!

GASTRIC ULCERS ARE ESTIMATED TO AFFECT 92% OF RACEHORSES AND ALMOST 60% OF PERFORMANCE HORSES. RECENT STUDIES HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THEY ARE COMMON IN PLEASURE HORSES AND EVEN DONKEYS.

HOW AND WHY DO ULCERS FORM

The lining of the stomach in the adult horse is split into two regions:

- The upper part is called the “Squamous Region” and has no secretory or absorptive function.
- The lower part of the stomach (the glandular region) is more complex and contains the glands that secrete hydrochloric acid.

Gastric ulcers can form in the upper region due

to an increased exposure to acid (for example if acid splashes up onto it during exercise) or in the lower region (due to problems with the natural protective mechanisms).

‘TRICKLE FEEDERS’

Horses have evolved as ‘trickle feeders’. This means that they are designed to eat almost constantly and have free access to light grazing for 24 hours a day. In the wild, eating would only occasionally be interrupted when the horse needed to run to escape from predators.

In contrast, our modern domesticated horse is usually stabled and given two or three cereal based feeds a day, sometimes with only small amounts of forage or grazing time. This results in long periods with little or no food intake. The glandular lining of the stomach of the horse

continuously secretes acid, whether or not the horse is eating. If a horse does not eat for several hours, this continued secretion of acid means that the environment in the stomach can quickly become very acidic, the acid then irritates or “burns” the lining of the stomach and ulcers can begin to develop. In contrast, horses that are constantly eating hay or grass have a much less acidic and more healthy environment in the stomach.

Other risk factors can also increase the susceptibility of the modern horse to ulcers:

- **Intense exercise (which can cause the acid of the stomach to splash onto the squamous part of the stomach lining)**
- **Travelling**
- **Stress.**



FREE ONLINE EQUINE ULCER RISK ASSESSMENT



ASSESS YOUR HORSES RISK OF GASTRIC ULCERATION BY TAKING PART IN AN ONLINE GASTRIC ULCER RISK ASSESSMENT

The UK's first online gastric ulcer risk assessment for horse owners was launched as part of the 2009 Gastric Ulcer Awareness Month (GUAM), organised by Merial Equine Health.

Merial has developed the online questionnaire to enable owners to evaluate their horse(s) risk of ulcers. By simply logging on to the WEBSITE: www.gastriculcerisk.co.uk owners, trainers and riders can complete a simple tick box questionnaire and will be immediately emailed with the results. In cases where an animal is considered to be at medium to high risk, owners will be referred to their veterinary practice to discuss the outcome of the assessment and, if necessary, to book an appointment for further investigations.

“IT’S PERHAPS LESS WELL KNOWN THAT ABOUT 60% OF PERFORMANCE HORSES AND 40% OF LEISURE HORSES ARE ALSO AFFECTED”.

“The symptoms of gastric ulcers can be vague and vary from one horse to another,” advises Dr Batson. “Whilst it’s generally known that around 90% of racehorses in training have ulcers, it’s perhaps less well known that about

60% of performance horses and 40% of leisure horses are also affected”.

Tolerance and signs of ulcers vary from one horse to another. However, horses with ulcers can display one or more of the following signs:

- POOR PERFORMANCE
- PICKY APPETITE
- MILD WEIGHT LOSS
- STAREY COAT
- DISCOMFORT ON GIRTH TIGHTENING
- COLIC
- (SALIVATION AND TEETH GRINDING – FOALS)

“Following the first two GUAM initiatives in 2007 and 2008, many more horses have been identified, diagnosed and successfully treated for gastric ulcers. Due to the vague nature of the symptoms, many of these horses were previously suspected of other ailments such as back and teeth problems, general poor performance, or behavioural issues. Indeed many horses have had their quality of life enhanced through the GUAM initiative,” adds Dr Batson.

The online gastric ulcer risk assessment for horse owners organised by Merial Equine Health

www.gastriculcerisk.co.uk



WELCOME TO THE GASTROSCOPY OPEN CLINIC DAY AT NUTWELL

THURSDAY 3RD JUNE AT NUTWELL.

UPCOMING GASTROSCOPY OPEN CLINIC AT OUR CLINIC AT NUTWELL.

We recently held a client evening on gastric ulceration which resulted in a lively and interesting discussion and a very enjoyable evening. Following on from this Merial (the company who make "Gastroguard", the main medicine used in the treatment of gastric ulceration) have agreed to sponsor a clinic at the surgery. During the day we will gastroscopically examine the stomach of a number of horses which the clients suspect may display some of the signs of gastric ulceration. There will also be an opportunity for clients to watch the gastroscopy being carried out and see the inside of the stomach on the monitor screen!

THE CLINIC WILL TAKE PLACE ON THURSDAY 3RD JUNE AT NUTWELL.

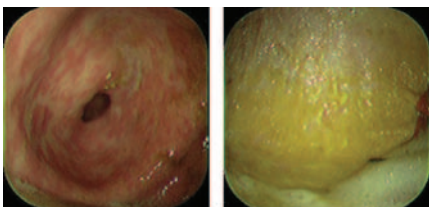
We are looking for clients who are willing to volunteer their horses to undergo gastroscopy. Obviously the ideal candidates are those which display some of the signs of gastric ulceration. We will also be taking names of clients who wish to come to see a gastroscopy examination performed on the day and be able to discuss gastroscopy and gastric ulceration with our vets and with Merial.

If you are interested in taking part in this clinic either as an observer or with your horse, please contact the equine office.

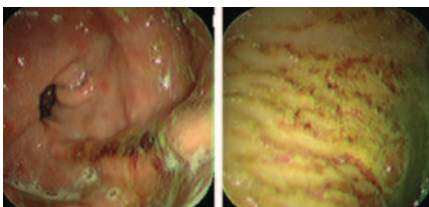


GASTROSCOPY OPEN CLINIC AT OUR CLINIC AT NUTWELL - NAMES EXPLORING

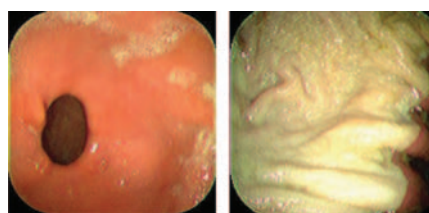
ULCERS ARE GRADED FROM 1 (MILD) TO 4 (SEVERE) ACCORDING TO THEIR SEVERITY. EXAMPLES OF THESE GRADES ARE SHOWN BELOW



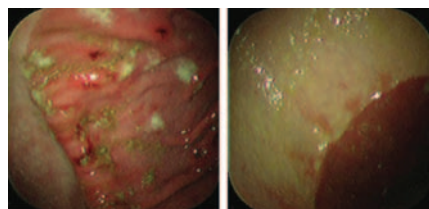
EQUINE GASTRIC ULCER GRADE 1



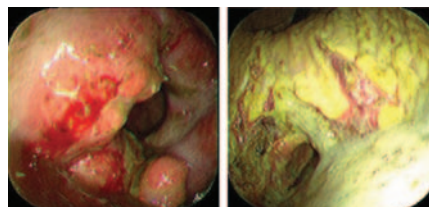
EQUINE GASTRIC ULCER GRADE 3



EQUINE GASTRIC ULCER GRADE 0



EQUINE GASTRIC ULCER GRADE 2



EQUINE GASTRIC ULCER GRADE 4

KEEP IN TOUCH!

We would be really grateful if you would take the time to give us your current contact details so that we can ensure that our records are up to date.

Having up to date details, including email addresses and mobile numbers helps us to help you in a number of ways:

- If you are expecting a veterinary visit we can keep you informed of any alteration in the vets time of arrival.
- With our new computer system we will, in time, be able to send you reminders for vaccinations and dental treatments by text or email as well as by post.
- If you are due for a routine visit we will also be able to let you know when we are in your area so that you can benefit from cheaper grouped visits.
- We can also send future newsletters or details of client talks by email.

keepintouch@stdavids-equine.co.uk

OKEHAMPTON UPGRADED

LOCAL CLIENTS CAN NOW BENEFIT FROM OUR NEW UPGRADED FACILITIES AT THE OKEHAMPTON BRANCH SURGERY

We have recently completed a full upgrade of the facilities available at our branch practice near South Zeal, Okehampton. The clinic is less than 10 minutes drive from Okehampton or Whiddon Down and has been purpose built to enable the practice to better serve our clients in the Okehampton area.

Most routine procedures can be carried out on-site, with up to the minute equipment and dedicated nursing care. The referral standard facilities of our main site at Nutwell will continue to provide back up for more complicated or lengthy procedures.



FACILITIES AVAILABLE AT THE CLINIC INCLUDE:

- New stabling for patients.
- 2 new examination rooms.
- Stocks to allow control of patients for certain procedures such as rectal examination or reproductive scanning.
- Hard and soft lungeing and trot-up areas for lameness diagnosis.
- On site radiography, endoscopy and ultrasound facilities.
- Easy access for lorries and trailers including a large turning circle.

EXAMPLES OF TREATMENTS THAT CAN BE CARRIED OUT AT OKEHAMPTON INCLUDE:

- Routine healthcare procedures such as vaccination or dental treatment.
- Lameness assessment, including on site radiography and ultrasound examinations.
- Reproductive examinations such as preparation for service, pregnancy scanning and artificial insemination.



- Standing surgical procedures such as molar tooth extraction.
- Medical diagnostic procedures such as ultrasound examination, endoscopic evaluation or biopsy.
- Treatments by qualified professionals in related disciplines including remedial farriery, physiotherapy and saddle fitting.

St David's Equine at Okehampton can be contacted on 01837 849096



GETTING TO KNOW YOUR HORSE INSIDE OUT!

HORSES INSIDE OUT DEMONSTRATION - AN ANATOMICAL GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING MOVEMENT.

We are excited to be holding a Horses Inside Out lecture demonstration by **Gillian Higgins** on **Tuesday 29th June 2010 at 7 for 7:30pm**. This is an exciting and highly practical way to learn or revise your horse anatomy. Gillian is a trained Veterinary Physiotherapist and consequently has an in depth knowledge of Horse anatomy. Gillian paints anatomical structures onto a willing volunteer and shows how form and function interact during exercise.



For more information or to book a place, please contact the St Davids Equine office: 01392 876622

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