

ST DAVID'S EQUINE

VETERINARY SURGEONS

NEWSLETTER

KEEPING IN TOUCH
AUTUMN 2010

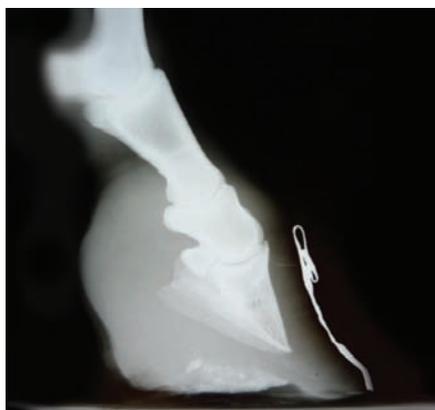
STOP PRESS! EQUINE INFECTIOUS ANAEMIA (SWAMP FEVER)

At the time of printing a case of EIA or Swamp Fever has been diagnosed in Devon. We do not have many details at present but believe that the horse was euthanased as a result. EIA is a notifiable disease, which

means that DEFRA must be informed of any suspected or confirmed cases. If you want to discuss EIA further or would like a fact sheet on the disease, please contact the practice now on: 01392 876622

LAMINITIS, CUSHINGS DISEASE AND EQUINE METABOLIC SYNDROME

UPDATE ON: LAMINITIS CAUSED BY CUSHING'S DISEASE (PPID) AND EQUINE METABOLIC SYNDROME(EMS)



The "LAMINITIS SEASON" came relatively late this year. Due to the dry weather in the spring the normal spring flush of grass came later than usual. However, when it came it brought with it its normal flurry of cases of laminitis and spasmodic colic. We felt that it would be a good time to make you aware of 2 relatively common causes of laminitis and how they can be diagnosed and treated.

Cushings Disease and Equine Metabolic Syndrome are a pair of disease processes that are closely linked in client's minds due to both being associated with an increased tendency to suffer with laminitis. The diseases are not, however, related in their causes, diagnostic tests or other clinical signs.

CUSHING'S DISEASE (PPID) is a disease of the Pars Intermedia area of the Pituitary gland at the base of the brain. In some cases a tumour is present in the gland, but often it is simply over-activity of the gland. In cases of the disease, excess quantities of ACTH hormone are produced by the Pituitary Gland. This ACTH acts on the Adrenal Gland to induce the overproduction of Cortisol. The clinical result of

this is a greatly increased risk of laminitis.

The most obvious sign of Cushing's Disease is an increased length of curly body coat, but this is not always dramatic. There may also be increased consumption of water (often spotted by increased wetness of bedding), increased sweating (especially on the surface of thick hair in cold weather), loss of body shape (reduced topline muscle, more pendulous belly) and an increased risk of other concurrent disease (especially Laminitis).

There are several tests for Cushing's Disease from a simple blood test for ACTH levels to a double blood test that shows the body's response to injected Dexamethasone.

Once diagnosed, treatment is usually extremely successful, reversing the clinical signs and rejuvenating the affected horse or pony. Pergolide, given daily as a tablet in feed, is the usual treatment.



EQUINE METABOLIC SYNDROME (EMS) is a more recently appreciated disease syndrome where high levels of circulating Insulin in the body give rise to a greatly increased risk of Laminitis. It is seen, typically, in horses and ponies with excess fat deposits on the crest, shoulders, rump, and tail head. Often these fat pads are present even though the rest of the body is fairly thin. There are some similarities to

Type 2 Diabetes in humans in that the fat deposits of the body lead to Insulin resistance in body cells. Consequently, treatment of horses with Metformin is often advocated with this disease (a drug used in the control of type 2 diabetes in humans). We have started using this treatment over the past 2 years or so and have found it to be very successful in a number of cases.



Testing for EMS requires a blood sample taken from a horse or pony that has been completely starved for a minimum of 6 hours (or overnight). This is then tested for Insulin levels. In normal horses, levels of circulating Insulin will drop to low levels in the absence of 'food stimulus', whilst in EMS cases, levels of circulating Insulin remain abnormally high.

TESTING FOR BOTH DISEASES

For cases where laminitis has occurred unexpectedly despite good standards of management, or with cases that show other typical signs, blood samples taken at the same time (following the 6 hour fasting) can be tested for both of the above conditions. This can then enable a definitive diagnosis to be achieved and for the correct treatment to be started.

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

CONGRATULATIONS!

CONGRATULATIONS TO SPONSORED RIDER, HELEN WEST

We extend many congratulations to our sponsored rider, Helen West who had a recent win at the Mitsubishi Motors Hartpury International Horse Trials on her horse "Mon Chapelle". Helen West (aged 30yrs) from Ipplepen, took the coveted title in the CCI* at The Mitsubishi Motors Hartpury Horse Trials in Gloucestershire over the weekend of 12th - 15th August.

Riding her own 'Mon Chapelle' (a 17.1hh 7yr old bay gelding), Helen beat off a 125 strong field to win her first 3 Day Event. She was of course a very successful Junior & Young Rider, winning Team gold at the Young Rider European Championships back in 2001 at Waregem, Belgium, but this was her first individual title. Lying in 10th place after the dressage phase, Helen and the French bred 7yr old posted a fabulous Cross Country round clear, and inside the optimum time, raising her to 4th place (and the highest place Brit) going into the Showjumping phase.

Clear rounds were few and far between on Sunday and the Showjumping proved very influential. Helen kept her cool and jumped a clear round which piled the pressure on the three riders above her, who all faulted, leaving her the clear winner on a score of 47.3

Second placed Georgie Spence finished on 49.9 just 2.6 penalties away from Helen (lowest score wins).

"I was very conscious that lowering just 1 pole would drop us down the order" said Helen. "When I jumped clear, I was delighted, but never in my wildest dreams did I think I would come up to first position!!"



Helen has produced 'Mon Chapelle' (stable name 'Pierre') from a 5yr old and last year qualified him for the PAVO 6yr old Championships, and also secured a place for him on the 2012 Equine Pathway (a programme designed to recognise potential young horses for the future).

"He is such a lovely tempered horse" says Helen of 'Pierre', "my 9yr old niece can lead him to and from the field and even ride him up the drive. He is a real gentleman!!"

Helen is based at Ipplepen, and runs a competition yard from her parents

establishment, specialising in producing young horses. She is kindly sponsored by St Davids Equine Veterinary Practice based at Lympstone, Exmouth and was quick to praise her vet Tony Kaye for all the help she had received prior to Hartpury with Pierre's preparation.

"I have some very exciting horses for the future and am very much looking forward to contesting the Young Horse Championships at Osberton International 3 Day Event in Nottinghamshire, in October. Pierre will step up a level and contest the CCI** whilst my 2 exciting 6yr olds 'Strawberry Mojo' and 'Windsurfer' will run in the CCI*"

REDUCING YOUR 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.

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.

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

ST. DAVIDS EQUINE STAFF CORNER

RICHARD FROST

I HAVE BEEN WORKING AT ST DAVID'S EQUINE SINCE 2007, HAVING SPENT OVER 5 YEARS IN A PREDOMINANTLY EQUINE JOB IN SHROPSHIRE.

My roles and interests within the practice are very diverse; I have a regular routine 'donkey' visit to Town Barton Farm (run by the Donkey Sanctuary) which, as well as providing veterinary treatment for the various medical and surgical conditions of the Donkeys, also includes the challenge of doing all the dental work on the Mules housed there.

Ben Crisp and I share the responsibility for all the anaesthetics at St David's Equine, including those done for our guest orthopaedic and soft tissue surgeon Ollie Crowe. I also have particular interests in equine dentistry, gastroscopy (for the diagnosis of stomach ulcers) and wound management amongst many others.

I try to spend every second of my spare time with my wife Kate and my two children, Harry (4 yrs)



and Claudia (18mths). We are also expecting the arrival of our third child at the start of October. Other interests outside work include playing football, running (I completed the London Marathon in 2008), surfing and snowboarding but all of these activities have taken a back seat as my family has grown.

This is the first of a regular column in our newsletter, the purpose of which is to introduce, over time, all of our staff to clients who may not yet have met them or only talked to them on the phone.

PRICE REDUCTIONS FOR REPEAT MEDICATIONS AND FEED SUPPLEMENTS



We recognise that owning a horse can become expensive, particularly if they are diagnosed with an ongoing condition that requires long term veterinary treatment with drugs or supplements. In order to try to help our clients during this time of economic recession we have been working hard with our suppliers over the last few months to try to reduce the prices of our repeat medications and supplements.

In partnership with Janssen and Dechra we are pleased that we have been able to significantly reduce the prices for complete boxes of Equipalazone, Danilon and Pro-Dynam which are the main anti-inflammatory drugs used for long term pain relief in horses with arthritis or laminitis.

We have also been able to reduce the prices of our supplement range (including joint supplements and respiratory supplements) to levels which are competitive with online pharmacies and we will soon be making these supplements available to our clients over the

internet via our website as well as directly from the practice. Because there is little regulation of the supplement industry and in many cases little or no clinical research of the efficacy of supplements, we have only chosen supplements for this range that we feel have a good basis in science and we have found in practice to work for various conditions. We hope that this will give our clients peace of mind that they are using supplements which are both efficacious and good value for money.

We are also currently in discussion with distributors of human medicines to try to find alternative, cheaper sources of the human medications that are routinely used in horses and will report our progress in future editions of the newsletter.

These price changes are an addition to our successful equine worming scheme which has supplied worming advice and competitive pricing for worming products over the past few years.

NEW SADDLERY STUDIO OPENING SOON AT NUTWELL

Nutwell Saddlery are currently building a dedicated Saddle Studio at the Nutwell site which is now nearing completion. The saddle studio will be home to their large selection of saddles and accessories that have been sourced from the finest manufacturers. The purpose built consultation suite will have an indoor fitting area with direct access to the indoor arena, where saddles can be demo ridden at all paces including jumping.

Nutwell Saddlery specialises in remedial saddlery and the supplying and fitting of new saddles and now have three fully qualified saddle fitters. Janet, Kerry and Kate all hold the Society of Master Saddlers Saddle Fitting certificate (this is the best reassurance you can get that a saddle fitter has the experience and



knowledge required to ensure a correct fit for your horse). They will also continue to offer the current mobile saddle fitting service visiting homes and yards across Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Dorset with flexible day, evening and weekend appointments.

If you would like to talk to a member of the saddlery team please call 01392 877896 or email: info@nutwellsaddlery.co.uk Further information about the saddlery can also be found on www.nutwellsaddlery.co.uk

SARCOIDS ARE SERIOUS!

THE COMMONEST SKIN TUMOUR IN HORSES. PART I

INTRODUCTION

Sarcoids are the commonest skin tumour of horses so many owners are likely to have had some experience of dealing with them. However, it is a disease that is frequently misunderstood, probably because of the huge variation in clinical signs and because of the unpredictability of the treatments currently available to us. This first article tries to give a better explanation of what sarcoids are, how, why and where they occur. The second article will cover prevention, treatment and prognosis and will feature in the following newsletter.

BACKGROUND

Sarcoids occur in all sexes, ages, breeds and colours and they can develop at any age, although most cases are first noticed between 2 and 10 years of age. They are specific to the skin and the tissue directly underneath and whilst they can be very invasive locally they do not metastasize (spread) to the internal organs. There is also some evidence to suggest a varying genetic susceptibility to sarcoids in horses which helps explain the variations in numbers and types of sarcoid seen between individuals. There is also a familial tendency to develop sarcoids which should be taken into consideration when thinking of breeding from an animal with Sarcoid lesions. Interestingly, the gene responsible for the susceptibility to sarcoids is not present in Lipizzaner horses and so the breed appears to be totally resistant.

The number of sarcoids affecting an individual horse is very variable but the maxim 'the fewer he's got, the fewer he'll get' is often true. Some horses may develop hundreds of lesions, others may have only one or two. Some lesions can grow very rapidly and aggressively, whilst other horses may have a few lesions, of any size, that remain static for years and years, possibly even for the whole life of the horse. Occasionally these static lesions may spontaneously grow without any apparent reason.

Very occasionally horses may spontaneously heal with complete disappearance of the lesions and these horses are often never affected again. It is thought that these horses may have developed some sort of immunity to the underlying cause. It should be stressed that the likelihood of this occurring is very, very rare.

Sarcoid is best regarded as a form of skin cancer, they should not be termed 'warts' as this gives the wrong impression about the severity, treatment and possible outcome of the disorder. They should never be regarded as just

'cosmetic blemishes', some may develop into very serious, even life threatening lesions.

WHAT CAUSES SARCOIDS?

The exact cause has never been conclusively proven but it is strongly thought that the Bovine Papillomavirus (BPV) plays a role in the development of sarcoids. BVP-like genetic material has been found in a high proportion of sarcoids but no actual virus particle has yet been found. What is clearer is the role of flies in the spread of sarcoids over the individual horse but whether sarcoids can be passed between horses is very uncertain. Flies are thought to feed on



MALEVOLENT - SARCOID



MIXED TYPE - SARCOID



OCCULT - SARCOID



VERRUCOSE - SARCOID

sarcoids and then bite skin in certain areas or on damaged skin thus spreading sarcoids over the body. For this reason, any wound found on a horse with sarcoids should be protected from flies until it has fully healed.

Sarcoids are usually found in distinct predilection sites, the commonest being those areas with thin skin, limited or no hair cover and a tendency to sweat; these are also the areas where flies prefer to feed. Consequently, they are rare on the trunk, back and neck but they

can occur at any site where there is skin damage; the extent of damage does not have to be great. Injection sites, tack rub marks on the face or girth region or very minor injuries can be enough.

TYPES OF SARCOID

There are 6 different types of Sarcoid, each with its own treatment limitations and prognostic differences. Each also has certain predilection sites on the body but they can all occur at any site.

OCCULT - Usually appear as grey hairless, often circular areas. Commonly found on the face, armpit and inner thigh and groin areas.

VERRUCOSE - Grey and scabby in appearance, frequently containing small lentil like solid lumps within. May become ulcerated. Varying in size and definition. Common in the face, groin, sheath and armpits.

NODULAR - Discreet single or multiple nodules of variable size. Skin involvement varies meaning sometimes the skin can be moved freely over the top of the nodule, sometimes it can't. Some ulcerate and form bleeding, weeping masses. Common under the skin in the eyelid, armpit, thigh and groin regions.

FIBROBLASTIC - Fleshy masses that may be firmly attached to the skin or hang on small pedicles. Often have wet ulcerated surfaces that bleed easily. Common everywhere and may develop from a milder form of Sarcoid following damage. They also develop at the site of skin injuries on the legs.

MALEVOLENT - The rarest but most aggressive type which spread extensively through the skin with cords of tumour tissue interspersed with nodules and fibroblastic lesions. They often have verrucose or occult sarcoids overlying them. Common in the face and elbow areas.

MIXED TYPE - variable mixtures of two or more types of Sarcoid. Can develop at any site but commonest on the head, armpit and groin. If you suspect your horse has sarcoids you should have them checked out by a vet as soon as possible.

The vet will then make an assessment as to the type of Sarcoid present and, possibly with the help of Professor Knottenbelt from Liverpool Vet School, will decide on the most appropriate treatment. Don't wait for the condition to get better, it probably will not. In fact it will probably get worse and treatment becomes increasingly difficult and less likely to succeed as the lesions develop.

REMEMBER, SARCOIDS ARE SERIOUS!!



The Chicken Vet is a new website set up by St David's Poultry Team in response to an ever increasing number of calls from chicken owners and other vets asking for advice on the care and treatment of chickens. Keeping chickens has become increasingly popular and it is believed there are now as many as 750,000 hobby owners in Britain, up significantly from just

A NEW ONLINE SERVICE FOR CHICKEN OWNERS FROM ST DAVIDS POULTRY TEAM

50,000 a decade ago. The main aim of the site is to offer veterinary help and advice to chicken keepers, it includes a unique health care pathway that people can follow to help them with common problems and ailments with their chickens, this will lead them to a recommended product or they will be advised to seek veterinary advice. Owners can also register on the site with



one of our associated practices, where they can take their chicken to a vet with a specific interest in bird health. **For more information visit: www.chickenvet.co.uk**

ST DAVID'S EQUINE PRACTICE LTD

Nutwell Estate, Lympstone, Exmouth, Devon EX8 5AN TEL: 01392 876622 • FAX: 01392 875335
equine@stdavids-equine.co.uk www.stdavids-equine.co.uk