

ST DAVID'S EQUINE

VETERINARY SURGEONS

NEWSLETTER

KEEPING IN TOUCH
SUMMER 2012

GIVE YOUR HORSE AN MOT IN 2012!



Last year we launched a new optional service that we offer at the time your horse is vaccinated. Our "Routine Health Check" at vaccination includes a thorough "MOT" of your horse at the highly subsidised price of £15 plus VAT. As well as the examination, this price includes a faecal egg count and worming advice at no extra charge. Other routine services, such as microchipping or routine blood tests, are also available at the health check at greatly reduced prices.

The aim of these services is to allow us to pick up signs of disease early, often before clinical signs start to affect your horse. In many cases this can allow successful diagnosis and treatment before a clinical problem affects your horse's welfare or performance.

You will receive a full colour summary of your horse's routine healthcare examination, together with any recommended treatments or actions. We can also provide you with a customized folder in which you can keep all your horses healthcare information.

**ROUTINE HEALTH-CHECKS
AT THE TIME OF VACCINATION.**

SERVICES INCLUDED IN THE ROUTINE HEALTHCHECK PRICE OF £15 ARE:

- Examination of the heart and lungs at rest.
- Examination of the eyes with an ophthalmoscope.
- Examination of the teeth, including the use of a gag (full mouth speculum).
- Examination of the back, joints and feet visually and by palpation for signs of joint disease or issues of foot balance.
- A trot up in a straight line on a hard surface to detect early signs of lameness.
- Discussion of your worming programme.
- A free faecal worm egg count.
- An optional blood sample for tapeworm is also offered but in this case, although we will take the blood sample at no cost to you, we do make a charge to cover the external lab fee.

As well as these services, additional services will be offered, again at greatly reduced prices:

- A routine blood health profile (haematology, biochemistry or both).
The blood sample will be taken free of charge and the blood screen carried out at less than half price.
- Microchipping.
- Preferential prices for worming products.

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

ST. DAVIDS EQUINE STAFF CORNER

ZOE HODGSON



Hi, my name is Zoe Hodgson, I'm 36 years old and I have been working at St David's Equine Practice as an Equine Office Assistant for just over a year. My role involves supporting Claire in the office dealing with clients, either by telephone or in reception, booking appointments with the vets, handling calls from the emergency phone, and when required help out on the yard, whether it be mucking out, trotting up or preparing horses for surgery. I love my job and feel that I have the best of both worlds... especially when I don't have to trot up in the rain!

Before I joined the practice I worked at DEFRA for 7 years as an admin officer and before that I served in the Royal Navy as a Communicator.

In my spare time I look after my horse Shadow, otherwise known as Fatty Lumpkins! We enjoy competing at local shows and riding club events, he is a real all-rounder and enjoys a bit of everything but mostly eating!!! I started riding when I was about 5 and when I was old enough I used to cycle to the local riding school every weekend to help out so I could get a free ride! I got my first pony Tea-bags when I was 13, who I owned for 19 years and kept going to the ripe old age of 32!

When I'm not with The Beast I enjoy supporting Exeter Chiefs rugby team and when I can motivate myself running too! In March next year I'm hoping to complete The Grizzly, a 20ish mile off road running race (I completed the 9 1/2 mile Grizzly Cub this year) and hoping to get Richard Frost to join me but I don't think he'd make it...

POOP IN THE POST!

A NEW POSTAL WORM EGG COUNT SERVICE FROM ST DAVID'S EQUINE



Janie, our head nurse, has started a new service for our client's horses "Poop in the Post"! This is a postal worm egg count service designed to help you monitor your horse's worm status throughout the year. This will allow you to worm your horse when your horse has a known worm problem rather than using regular worming treatments.

FREE VETERINARY ADVICE. We advise that faecal worm egg counts should be carried out every 3 months in March, June and September and depending on the results we will advise you whether or not your horse needs worming and which wormers are appropriate for the worm burden noted.

FREE POST AND PACKING IS INCLUDED. If you request a worm egg count on this scheme, we will send you a free collection kit with full instructions and everything you need to take the sample and to return it.

Worm egg counts are a reliable way of diagnosing adult roundworm infestation but unfortunately looking for tapeworm eggs or redworm larvae in faeces is not a reliable way to diagnose these problems. Because of this we will recommend two strategic worming treatments during the year to take account of these specific threats.

FREE REMINDERS BY TEXT OR EMAIL. Once you are on the programme we will contact you 2 weeks before the next worm egg count (or strategic worming treatment) is required. We will remind you by text, phone, post or email (whichever method you prefer). If you decide to go ahead with an egg count we can send you out a kit by post, you can come in to the practice to collect one, or if the vets are with you they will all have them in their cars, all you have to do is ask.

Now the all important question.....

How much is it?

It is just £10 + VAT for each sample.

For further information, please contact JANIE or ARIANNE in our equine office: 01392 876622

EQUINE HERPES VIRUS – SHOULD YOU DO SOMETHING?

Equine herpes virus (EHV) is a contagious viral infection which can cause respiratory disease, abortions and neurological disease. It is more common than flu and is in fact the commonest viral cause of respiratory disease in horses. It is also the commonest infectious cause of abortion.

THERE ARE TWO DIFFERENT TYPES OF EHV WHICH CAUSE DISEASE IN HORSES: EHV-1

In breeding mares, an infection of EHV can seriously endanger the life of her foal, causing abortions in the last third of pregnancy. EHV-1 is the most commonly diagnosed cause of infectious abortion.

On studs with multiple pregnant mares, EHV-1 can cause abortion storms in susceptible populations and so we strongly advise protecting breeding mares by vaccination.

Although it is relatively rare, EHV-1 infection can cause a neurological disease. Infected animals can become paralysed, collapse and have a very poor prognosis for survival.

EHV-4

EHV-4 is very common and causes respiratory disease. This form of the virus tends to cause a low grade infection with mild clinical signs but it can also put extra strain on the immune system and make the horse more susceptible to other diseases by dragging it down. This can last for a number of weeks and so causes great disruption to competition and racing yards, making infected horses perform below their potential over a relatively long period.

EHV does not stimulate significant natural immunity after initial infection and the main concern for the equine population as a whole is the way the disease persists in our horses. Once a horse is infected, that individual can harbour the virus throughout its life and potentially shed the virus and infect other animals without showing any outward signs. Re-activation and shedding from infected horses tends to happen when they are stressed - typically when the horse moves yards, has some other disease or is in hard work.

Stable management and vaccination, in particular when dealing with potentially infected horses, are key to the control of the disease. Minimising the potential stresses that set off disease spread is important as well as reducing issues such as overcrowding. Horses that are sick



must be isolated. However this is not the whole answer and vaccination can play a big role. Vaccinating your horse will help prevent disease and perhaps, more importantly, will also help reduce the amount of infective virus that is shed to other in-contact horses, thus reducing the amount of disease present on your yard.

In collaboration with Pfizer Animal Health we are able to offer free second vaccinations to clients who would like to start vaccinating their horse against EHV, thus considerable reducing the cost of the primary vaccination course. **If you are interested in learning more about this disease and its control, please contact the practice for more information.**

FREE VACCINATIONS

HELPING YOU TO PROTECT YOUR HORSE AGAINST FLU, TETANUS OR EQUINE HERPES VIRUS



Together with Pfizer Animal Health we are working to improve preventative healthcare in our area by offering financial help to owners starting a new course of protection for flu, tetanus or equine herpes virus.

If you are starting a new vaccination programme for one of these diseases and your horse is either unvaccinated, or its vaccinations are more than 6 months out of date, we will offer you your horses second vaccination free of charge, provided that you have already paid for the first vaccination of the primary course with us by the time the second injection is due. The visit will be charged as normal. This is offered in addition to our competitive vaccine prices which are already some of the most competitive in the region.

This provides a great opportunity to upgrade your horses protection against these serious diseases at a realistic cost.

Please call the equine office for more details.

SEASONAL VARIATIONS IN LAMINITIS & AUTUMN RISE IN ACTH (CUSHING'S DISEASE)



Cushing's disease pony head

Many of you will be aware that seasonal variations are seen in the frequencies of laminitis cases. There is more than one reason for this as both diet and hormone variations can be seen in either spring or autumn that can influence the incidence of laminitis. Research has shown that there is a natural marked rise in circulating levels of the hormone ACTH in autumn. Recent research (www.talkaboutlaminitis.co.uk) has shown that the rise in ACTH is most marked in horses and ponies with Equine Cushing's Disease and that, therefore, autumn could be a good time to diagnose this disease. This website is full of useful information about laminitis, Equine Cushing's Disease (PPID) and Equine Metabolic Syndrome (EMS) and agrees with our experience that up to 90% of laminitis cases have an underlying hormonal cause.

Equine Cushing's Disease (PPID) and Equine Metabolic Syndrome(EMS)

Although both diseases cause an increase in susceptibility to laminitis, the two diseases are not related in their causes, diagnostic tests or other clinical signs.

Equine 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 and 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).

The most commonly used test for Cushing's Disease is a simple blood test for ACTH levels which is sent to a specialised laboratory. Once Cushing's Disease is 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



Radiograph of Laminitic hoof

tail head. Often these fat pads are present even though the rest of the body is fairly thin. Treatment of horses with Metformin is often advocated with this disease (a drug used in the control of type 2 diabetes in humans). Testing for EMS requires a blood sample (tested for Insulin levels) taken from a horse or pony that has been completely starved of feed for a minimum of 6 hours (or overnight). A small feed containing glucose is then given before a haynet and a second blood sample is taken 2 hours later. 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. In EMS cases, the insulin levels then rise dramatically after the glucose meal is given.

COME FOR A TOUR
AROUND ST DAVIDS
EQUINE PRACTICE
WITH ONE OF OUR
EQUINE NURSES



We have been in our new building for a few years now but still feel privileged to work in such lovely surroundings with such good clinical facilities and high end diagnostic equipment. Specialists such as Ollie Crowe (specialist orthopaedic surgeon), Jim Carter (specialist veterinary ophthalmologist) and Geoff Lane (specialist equine upper respiratory tract surgeon) regularly visit to examine and treat cases and remind us that our clinic facilities are equal to those of much larger referral centres in the UK. We feel that the facilities play a large part in helping us to provide a full range of high quality care to our clients horses.

Many clients are surprised at the quality of our facilities when they bring their horse to the practice for the first time and others say how much they would like to look around the clinic. This has given Janie, our head nurse, the idea of offering our clients the opportunity to look around the clinic in small groups, see the equipment and facilities that we have to offer and discuss these with a key member of our in-patient clinical team.



If you have always wanted to see inside an equine veterinary clinic, see how we anaesthetise horses, look around our operating theatre or bone scanning unit, see the "hotel accommodation" we offer to our equine clients or would just like to discuss our work in more detail this would be an ideal opportunity.

Janie and Arianne will be conducting practice tours for small groups of up to 4 or 5 people at a time by prior arrangement. Please ring Janie to book a time if you are interested and please feel free to bring your equine owning friends too!!

COMPETITIVE PRICES FOR WORMING PRODUCTS

ST DAVID'S EQUINE WORMING SCHEME

In addition to our "Poop in the Post" scheme for faecal egg counting as an aid to strategic worming of horses we also run a more intensive worming programme. This programme is tailored for horses managed on premises where an overall programme of worm control and grazing management may be difficult to achieve. This may include horses on shared grazing or horses on pasture where ideal pasture management (pasture rotation with adequate resting of previously grazed pasture) is impractical.



Encysted (dormant) small strongyles in the gut wall

The scheme is run by Claire, our equine office manager, and it aims to:

- Demystify worming your horse by giving you free veterinary advice on which worming product to use and when to use it. Our advice is based on the latest veterinary research and is independent of the pharmaceutical companies that produce the worming products and large retailers who may have a commercial interest in recommending certain worming products.
- Take the worry out of worming your horse. We send you the number and type of wormers you will need for each of your horses at the time they are required.
- Give you the best deal that we can across the full range of equine worming products to give you confidence that you are buying at competitive prices.
- Give you peace of mind that your horse has been treated appropriately for all the main equine worms.

COMPETITIVE PRICES

We review our prices every 6 months to ensure that we remain as competitive as possible with other outlets. We survey the products available

and compare all products with the same action and same active ingredient in order to get the best deal for our clients.

MAKING SENSE OF THE PRODUCTS AVAILABLE

There are a bewildering number of worming products available and making sense of these is not always easy.

- Many apparently different products with different brand names contain the same active ingredients but sell at wildly differing prices.
- Several products contain multiple active ingredients which can further confuse owners.
- Some active ingredients are more active than others against certain worm threats and so will be more appropriate to use in some circumstances.
- There is widespread resistance to the active ingredients contained in some worming products.
- Worming with certain products at certain times can actually increase the risk of disease due to worm damage in some situations.



Encysted (dormant) small strongyles in the gut wall

THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF OUR WORMING PLAN

To provide optimum protection a worming plan must address the main worm threats each year at the time most appropriate to treat them:

- One or two treatments for tapeworm each year. The timing of this is not critical, but tapeworm treatments are normally carried out in spring and autumn.
- A treatment for dormant small redworm larvae in winter.
- A treatment for bots in the winter.

- Regular routine treatment for adult roundworm during the grazing season.
- Appropriate rotation of wormer types to minimise the build up of resistance to wormers by the worms.
- It is always preferable that all horses on a yard are treated with the same product at the same time. This reduces the risk of the build up of worms on pasture and the risk of a treated horse being reinfected by worms from an untreated grazing partner.
- We recommend that you worm any new horses entering the yard before they go out to graze. They should then remain housed for 24 hours after worming before going out to pasture.



worm burden at colic surgery

HOW DOES THE PLAN WORK

We will agree a worming plan with you in advance and take a note of your horses names and an estimate of their weights. We will then send you the number and type of wormers that you need when they are needed. All you need to do is to administer the doses when they arrive!! If you prefer, you can pick up your wormers from the surgery.

We normally ask you to pay for the wormers received within 14 days to take advantage of the preferential prices we offer on the scheme. This is because the prices are deliberately kept low and consequently we cannot offer credit on them.

Strategic Worming - The "Poop in the Post" Scheme

We are also happy to give advice on strategic worming of those horses at lower risk of worm infestation. The mainstay of strategic worming is normally regular analysis of faeces to look for evidence of roundworm infestation (checking for worm eggs every 3 months). This strategic approach is covered by our "Poop in the Post" scheme which is described in a separate article.

If you would like to join our worming scheme, or would like to find out more, please contact Claire in the equine office on 01392 876622 (option 2).

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT FOR YOUR LAMINITIC HORSE OR PONY AT ST DAVIDS

We recently installed a new weigh bridge at the practice. Manufactured by Horseweigh, this is a similar model to that used at all of the main events in this country and will weigh horses, ponies and donkeys to a high accuracy of less than half a kilogram. We originally bought the weigh bridge to help us in accurately dosing both medications and anaesthetics for our hospitalised horses, however it is now increasingly being used by clients bringing their ponies or horses to the practice for weighing as



a routine health management procedure or as part of a weight loss programme for animals with a history of laminitis or metabolic syndrome. You can weigh your horse at the surgery for only £10. If you would like to use the weigh bridge regularly we will weigh your horse free of charge every third weighing.

If you would like to have your horse or pony weighed at the surgery, please St Davids Equine to arrange an appointment on 01392 876622.

ST DAVID'S EQUINE PRACTICE LTD

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