



KINGS BOUNTY

EQUINE PRACTICE

Spring 2020 Newsletter

PetPlan Veterinary Awards Nominations 2020

We were over the moon with all the nominations the Kings Bounty team received this year in the PetPlan Veterinary Awards 2020.

Thank you to all of our lovely clients who nominated us and we will wait to find out whether an individual or the practice becomes shortlisted.



Happy Maternity Leave Laura

We would like to wish Laura Simmons a very happy and healthy maternity leave and wish her all the best for the arrival of her little one.

Watch out for some new faces in the Kings Bounty Team soon.



Gastroscopy Offer For March Only

This is a great opportunity for those of you who have had concerns that your horse may have ulcers or would just like to have your horse checked for peace of mind before the competition season gets into full swing!

We have discounted the price to £175+VAT for a single horse on a yard and £150+VAT per horse if there are 2 or more horses on a yard that need scoping.

Please note that this offer does not include the visit and sedation.

If you would like to book your horse/ pony in for a scope this month then please call the practice or Sara directly.



EHV Outbreak

We would like to thank all the people involved in the EHV outbreak this year who worked so hard to keep the disease contained and reduce the risk of spread elsewhere. It was a tough time for all those involved, especially for all the horse owners at Crofton. Thank you to all the local veterinary practices who collaborated so well during the outbreak, working with each other and the horse owners to clear the infection.

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Check body condition

Before adjusting your horse's diet for Spring, check your horse's body condition. Some may have lost weight over the winter and some may have put on too much.



Exercise

If you have not ridden or exercised your horse much over the Winter months, make sure you bring your horse back in to work slowly.

Too much work too soon could lead to injury/pain.



Check your tack

Before you get started with exercising your horse, check your tack as your horse is quite likely to have lost muscle and their shape may have changed.



Check your horse's skin

Over spring your horse will shed their heavy winter coat, make sure you check them over thoroughly for cuts and grazes and any other skin problems, such as ringworm, rain-scald or sweet itch.



Targeted worming

Excessive worming within the horse population has led to a growing resistance problem. The first step to help reduce development of resistance is to start intelligent targeted worming by collecting faeces for a worm egg count and having it assessed.

Whether to de-worm or not can then be discussed with your veterinary surgeon hopefully leading to a reduction in the risk of resistance, damage to the environment but also saving money in the long term.



Rugging

It is important not to over-rug your horse! Spring can bring mixed weather and temperatures can fluctuate. Horses are extremely good at regulating their own temperature. As a general rule horses do much better slightly cold than too warm, and it is much easier for a horse to warm up than to try and cool down.

Be very careful in choosing a well-fitted rug for your horse to prevent any rubs or sores.



Flies & Midges

The flies and midges will be out in force. Horses can be irritated by the bites of many types of flies. Proteins within the saliva of midges cause a localised allergic reaction within the skin, which is called 'sweet itch'.



Ragwort

Ragwort is very poisonous to horses, if eaten it can lead to liver failure. Make sure you remove ALL ragwort from your horse's field, by pulling the whole plant up, including the roots, and make sure you wear gloves.



Spring grass

Monitor your horse's grass intake. Spring grass is high in nutrients called fructans (sugar) which are stored in blades of grass. Horses will want to gorge on the lush Spring grass which means their intake of sugars may be high, which is one of the main causes of laminitis.



Spring colic

Horses can be affected by colic any time of the year. During springtime the most common cause of colic is spasmodic colic due to excess gastrointestinal motility and gas accumulation.

In the spring, the grass is lush and high in sugars. As a result, there is excess fermentation in the horse's gut leading to a build up of gas, which can cause the horse to colic. The signs of colic may be transient as these gas pockets in the intestine may shift. The horse can become very uncomfortable followed by a period of comfort and then start to show obvious colic signs again as the gas moves through the gastro intestinal tract.

As the gas accumulates, the intestine stretches leading to discomfort for the horse. The horse will show typical colic signs but generally with excessive gut sounds.



How to spot the signs of laminitis in your horse

Equine laminitis – be safe not sorry!

Laminitis can affect any horse or pony of any age at any time of year. It's one of the biggest causes of lameness and can result in euthanasia on humane grounds. So every horse owner needs to be alert to the signs of laminitis, all year round.

Laminitis is a painful and crippling foot disease, usually seen in the front feet. It causes inflammation of the laminae tissues that attach the hoof to the pedal bone in the foot. In cases of chronic laminitis these tissues start to break down and die, causing the hoof and the pedal bone to separate and the pedal bone to sink and/or rotate. If the pedal bone sinks too far it can actually protrude from the sole of the foot.

It can be easy to miss the early signs of laminitis but the sooner you spot the symptoms the greater the likelihood of your horse making a full recovery. If your horse has the following signs you should speak to your vet immediately:

- Foot tenderness
- Shifting weight from foot to foot
- Heat in the hooves
- Divergent ridges on the hoof that can be seen and felt
- Obvious lameness or a potterly or shortened stride
- Subtle or obvious changes in stance
- Attempts to move weight off the front feet and onto the hind legs
- Raised digital pulse (felt behind the pastern)
- Reluctance to move

It's important to spot the signs of laminitis as early as possible, remove the cause and treat the condition. With foot support and realignment there is a good chance of a full recovery.

How to prevent 'gassy' colic:

- Avoid lush paddocks
- Strip graze the paddocks
- Limit turnout to a few hours a day
- Avoid sudden changes in diet. Aim to introduce a new feed gradually over 2 weeks



Why breed from your mare?



The prospect of the clip-clop of tiny hooves on your yard can be alluring but there are many aspects to consider before you get started.

The most important consideration is whether your mare is suitable to breed from. How old is she and has she had foals before? Older maiden mares have much lower fertility rates than younger mares or those that have foaled before. Are there any undesirable genetic traits that could be passed on to the foal? Certain types of orthopaedic disease can be passed on so it's important to talk to your vet before making your decision.

How do I check my mare's breeding credentials?

If your mare is registered with a breed society it is advisable to contact them to check if she has already been approved for breeding. This involves an assessment of her conformation, bloodlines and movement. If your mare is not registered speak to your vet to discuss her suitability for breeding.

How do I choose the right stallion for my mare?

If your mare has been approved by a breed society they should be able to advise on a suitable match from their stallion register. Ideally the stallion should help counter any weak points your mare may have but remember this is not a guarantee the foal will not receive the mare's traits and you should take expert advice regarding the heritability and impact of any issues. The stallion will also need the performance traits you are looking for, but again it is no guarantee

that the foal will inherit them. Meet the stallion first to see how he behaves and moves. It's a good idea to take a look at some of his previous offspring too.

Artificial Insemination (AI) or natural covering?

Whilst natural cover is still required by certain governing bodies such as The Jockey Club, artificial insemination plays a big role in equine breeding, bringing with it a host of benefits to the mares, stallions and personnel involved. Artificial insemination has made it possible for owners to get access to the best genetic material from around the world.

Artificial insemination is the process of collecting semen from the stallion and manually placing it in the uterus of the mare. Semen can be either fresh, chilled or frozen.

How long is the gestation period?

The average gestation period for a horse is 330-345 days – or around 11 months. The natural breeding season for horses is from May until August, to bring foaling at a time when environmental conditions should be best for their survival. For thoroughbreds, the breeding season begins much earlier in the year. 1st January is the official date of birth for thoroughbreds and thus earlier foals will be as mature as possible when they begin their racing careers.

When to castrate your colt

Traditionally this takes place in the spring of their yearling year, but colts can be castrated either earlier, as a foal, or later. Castrations are ideally carried out in Spring and Autumn. This is to avoid the flies of summer and the mud of winter. Both testicles must have descended into the scrotum and there should be no other material (e.g. herniated intestine) in the scrotum before castration is carried out.

Prior to castration the horse should be in good condition, have been wormed regularly and without any recent respiratory infection. He should have been previously vaccinated fully against tetanus but if not, he can receive antiserum at the time of surgery.

Castration can be performed under standing sedation and local anaesthesia or under general anaesthesia. The complication rate with standing castrations, in which the incisions are left open, are significantly higher than in those horses in which castration is performed under general anaesthesia, in an operating theatre.

Please contact us if you would like advise on the appropriate method for your horse.