



KINGS BOUNTY

EQUINE PRACTICE

Summer 2020 Newsletter

RCVS Accredited Practice

Did you know that Kings Bounty Equine Practice is an RCVS Accredited Practice?

The Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) is a voluntary accreditation scheme for veterinary practices. It was set up by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) to promote and maintain high standards in veterinary care. The Scheme does this by setting standards and inspecting the practices that choose to take part.

To maintain the accreditation, practices are inspected by RCVS Assessors every four years and there are random spot checks.



This RCVS Accredited Practice logo demonstrates that the practice has passed an independent inspection.

Are you horse's feet in good condition?

Your horse's hooves may have started to crack and look more brittle due to the hard dry ground. If this is the case, your horse may benefit from being placed on a **hoof supplement** such as our own.

Kings Bounty Equine Hoof Supplement

is a complete hoof supplement designed to improve hoof quality and rate of growth. Containing high levels of biotin, calcium, zinc, methionine, bio-available sulphur and amino acids, the supplement has been specially formulated to promote the synthesis of keratin sulphate, the main structural component in the hoof horn. The supplement will help to control and correct hoof abnormalities in all layers of the hoof wall.



We advise that you keep your horses feet regularly trimmed to ensure foot balance is kept in check to reduce the risk of your horse acquiring any injuries/lameness.

Thank You!

We would like to say thank you to everyone for being so understanding and patient over the last few months as we all adjust to a 'new normal'.

Vets and clients have had to learn how to deal with a variety of different socially distanced scenarios as we all adapt to a new way of working for the foreseeable future.

With more training and competitions successfully starting to get underway we hope that all of you enjoy the summer season with your horses.

The Kings Bounty Team



Sara preparing to take some socially distanced x-rays

How to keep your horse cool in the summer



Summer can be a lovely time for horse-riding, but high temperatures carry health risks for your horse. Hot weather can lead to dehydration, lethargy, sunburn and stomach problems that may even include colic. What can you do to help avoid these hazards and keep your horse cool?

Offer water

Your horse should always have access to fresh water, but don't be tempted to make it icy cold: 20°C is about right.

Don't forget the salts

When horses sweat, they're losing salts as well as water, and they need to replace both to restore the fluid balance in the body. A mineral salt block may be enough to allow your horse to replace lost salts. Adding electrolytes to the horse's water can also help, but many commercial electrolytes contain more sugar than salt! Make sure you get one with salt (sodium chloride) listed as the first ingredient. Always offer plain, fresh water alongside the water containing the electrolyte product.

Protect your horse from the sun

Horses can burn in sensitive places such as the eye area, and this increases their skin cancer risk. Make sure your horse always has access to enough shade in the hotter part of the day. Also consider applying sunblock to unpigmented areas of skin.



Choose cooler times of day

In really hot weather get out in the cooler early mornings and evenings to exercise your horse. If his stable is cool, why not keep him in during the day and turn him out at night? This will help keep your horse cool.

Keep an eye on feeding habits

The horse's stomach secretes gastric acid continuously and their digestive health depends on getting plenty of fibrous food to mop it up. Warm weather is a potential colic risk not only because it can cause horses to lose their appetite, but also because it may affect the quality of the pasture available for grazing – they may have eaten all the grass. Make sure there's enough hay or grass available and keep an eye out for any signs that your horse is losing interest in food.

Know the signs of heatstroke

Signs of heatstroke include an elevated heart rate, a high temperature, lethargy and excessive sweating (or lack of sweating). An overheated horse may also keep breathing hard in an attempt to cool down. Get to know your horse well and you will soon be able to tell if things are not quite right or if he is getting distressed. Always ask for professional help if you are worried – better safe than sorry.

Keep your horse cool effectively

All horses will benefit from effective cooling, no matter the type of competition or the level at which they are performing. This includes event horses, dressage horses, show jumpers, racehorses, polo ponies, endurance horses, driving horses, show horses and gymkhana ponies. Horses competing in temperatures of more than 26°C are less prone to heatstroke if they are cooled down quickly and effectively. The trick is to apply cold water, scrape it off and then re-apply while the horse is being walked around, which helps with respiratory rate recovery. It's best to try and carry out the cooling and walking in the shade.

Fly control: keeping your horse healthy and happy in summer

Flies are not only annoying they are also a health risk to our horses. While it's bad news that they are inevitable during the warmer months the good news is that you can take steps to reduce the fuss, bother and disease they cause. The best way is to be prepared and start your fly control programme before the flies really take hold.

It's not just horse flies you need to worry about. Horse flies are the culprits that usually spring to mind but there are plenty of other flying pests that can make your horse's life miserable and some can cause more than just misery. The bot fly lays eggs, usually on the horse's forelegs. These hatch in the horse's mouth as it is grooming itself and are transmitted to the stomach where they continue their life-cycle. The house or stable fly can transmit a worm that irritates the stomach and aggravates wounds. Midges can also cause an allergic reaction in some horses, commonly called sweet itch, which is far from sweet for your horse.

Other nasties such as ticks, lice and mites can make your skin crawl just to read about them and they may cause considerable discomfort to your horse.

If you have a problem with flies it pays to identify the types involved as this will give you some clues about how best to control them. For example, black flies are more likely to be found near streams whereas mosquitoes and midges like to hang out around stagnant water.

The best approach to fly control is two-fold: good management and the right fly repellent or insecticide.

Stable management for effective fly control

Flies tend to be attracted to and lay eggs on damp organic material such as feed or manure so keeping the yard swept and clean, removing droppings from the field and keeping the muck-heap away from the horses can all help to reduce the irritation posed by flies.



- Regularly clear horse droppings away from the stable and pasture so flies can't breed in them
- Keep the muck heap well away from where your horse sleeps and grazes
- Keep the stable scrupulously clean
- Make sure there are no puddles near the stables
- Consider putting a fly rug and/or a fly face-mask on your horse if it is badly affected
- Consider stabling your horse at certain times of the day – mornings and evenings when many flies are about
- Some people even put a fan in the stable to stop the flies coming in

Which fly product should I use?

As an owner it can be very difficult to choose which fly product will work best for you. A repellent aims to make the horse less attractive to the fly. An insecticide aims to kill the fly as soon as possible after contact with no biting needed. For maximum effectiveness, treatment should be started before the fly season has begun, to control breeding, and continued at regular intervals throughout the season.

There are many different sorts of repellents and insecticides but you should use one that's specifically designed for use on horses unless your vet has specifically advised you otherwise. Some need daily application, others less frequently. You might want to use a spray insecticide on the horse's coat and a cream product on sensitive areas like ears and sheath. You can also use some specifically designed insecticides in areas around the horse's stable where flies congregate such as the roof or on mesh around the windows – always check the product label carefully to ensure it is safe to use in a horse's environment.

Speak to your vet or somebody suitably qualified (an SQP) for the right information on products and preventative measures.





Equine Obesity

The COVID-19 outbreak saw a change in how we were able to manage our horses. Restriction in movement, yard closures and a stop on competitions led to increased turnout and less exercise of some horses and ponies. Grass is not like salad for horses! Our pastures often contain a high sugar content and can result in horses consuming up to 5x more energy than required which leads to weight gain and ultimately obesity. Where possible we must aim to limit the impact that this might have on the weight control of our horses.

Obesity and recent weight gain can have a number of negative consequences on health including:

- Increased laminitis risk
- Poorer prognosis for recovery from laminitis
- Increased risk of other causes of lameness from carrying extra weight
- Increase in pro-inflammatory mediators
- Respiratory compromise- mass of the respiratory tract may decrease relative to body mass
- Strangling small intestinal lesions (colic) due to pedunculated lipomas

Tips for managing weight:

- Body condition score your horse regularly to monitor weight and identify weight increases early which are then easier to reverse with restricted diet
- Swap high quality forage for low quality forage
- If managing horses at pasture, restrict grass intake using strip grazing. Advance fencing by small amounts twice daily to break up grass meals. Ensure good pasture management removing ragwort etc
- Decreasing duration of time at pasture using stabling can lead to the horse consuming more if access to grass during turnout time is not restricted
- If restricting your horse's diet it is important to include a low calorie feed balancer to ensure the horse is still receiving nutrients needed

New Equine ID Regulations

The deadline for compulsory microchipping is coming soon!

From the 1st October 2020 it will be compulsory in England for all horse owners to microchip their horses, ponies and donkeys. Please use the following link for further information:

<https://www.worldhorsewelfare.org/advice/general-advice/new-equine-id-regulations>

Equine Mites



Is your horse stamping their feet or itching their legs?

Mites are most commonly found in feathered native breeds, such as Cobs, Shires and Clydesdales. Affected horses are extremely itchy and constantly seen stamping or biting their lower limbs.

Although the mites often cannot be seen with the naked eye, a clinical examination from your vet is often sufficient enough to diagnose this irritable condition.

Further diagnosis can be made from a skin scrape, which will then be examined under a microscope. Currently there are no licensed treatments available, but the most commonly used treatment is Dectomax, which is given as a course of injections. For milder cases, shampoos and topical washes may be effective.

Clipping your horse's feathers and replacing all the bedding in their stable often, are also ways to manage and reduce the risk of mites.



Equine First Aid Wound Management

Horses and ponies are prey animals and thus over time, have evolved mechanisms to enable a speedy getaway from any perceived threats. In the modern setting, these “flight” instincts tend to result in frequent collisions with man-made structures including wire fencing, gates, water troughs, etc – structures which evolution hasn’t accounted for yet! For this reason, wounds affecting any region of the body but most commonly the limb and head regions are a common equine emergency that presents to our practice.

Wounds come in all shapes and sizes and the best outcomes are usually achieved when they are assessed and treated promptly. Extensive lacerations or heavily bleeding wounds generally receive such attention however sometimes it is the small, relatively innocuous looking wounds which can have much more serious implications for the horse if they are neglected in the early stages. Specifically, this is the case when such wounds are in close proximity to a synovial structure like a joint or a tendon sheath. The horse may not present all that lame initially and if the wound is small without much active bleeding, owners may be tempted to treat it themselves with topical sprays etc. If the wound is deep enough that the synovial structure is involved however, generally sepsis or infection of said structure will develop within a short period of time, usually leading to severe lameness and a poor prognosis for full recovery if the horse is not treated aggressively.



Despite providing a 24 hour emergency service, there are times when there may be a delay between a phone call being made and the vet arriving at your property. In these instances, it is prudent to have a first aid kit ready to deal with certain emergencies in consultation with your vet over the phone.

Suggestions for a basic first aid kit include:

- Plenty of bandage materials including poultice dressing for foot abscesses. As limb wounds are a common emergency we see, if the wound is very contaminated it is good practice to clean it by simple hosing if available and then applying a protective bandage to help prevent further contamination and slow down any bleeding before the vet arrives. Do not be afraid of padding (e.g. cotton wool, gamgee), the more the better!
- Thermometer and stethoscope. These can both be purchased quite cheaply and are invaluable tools in giving the vet a better idea as to the status of a sick or painful horse. Normal ranges of vital signs in an adult horse:

- **Temperature 37.5-38.5°C**
- **Heart Rate 30-45 beats/minute**
- **Respiration Rate 12-16 breaths/minute**

- Wound ointments and spray. These products are useful in cases of simple superficial wounds which are not directly over any vital structures including joints and tendon sheaths. Take care not to use caustic products or products containing cortisone (e.g. betnovate) on a fresh wound as they can delay/inhibit healing
- Records of tetanus, influenza and other vaccinations plus any recent medications are very useful as your vet will generally ask for this information when taking a history
- If you have a smartphone, feel free to take pictures of a wound or eye injury for example and send to your vet. A picture can paint a thousand words for us sometimes!