

A Warm Welcome to Amy!

We are delighted to introduce our new veterinary addition, Amy Leather MRCVS to the Kings Bounty Team. Amy has recently completed two back-to-back internships - one at Bristol University and one at Scone Equine Hospital, Australia. The internships have equipped Amy with a wide range of experience and skills from the medical care of neonates and broodmares, through to lameness, imaging and surgical case management.

As a local Hampshire lass, she already has good knowledge of the area and having spent time with the practice as a student, knows the practice well!

When Amy isn't working, she can be found walking her dog, showjumping or hanging off a rock face....oh and it seems that we may have another veterinary baker in our midst.

We are sure that you will all join us in making Amy feel welcome and glad that she has returned to her roots!



Kingsley Horse Show



Back in August Kings Bounty showed their support for the local horse show Kingsley Horse Show, by sponsoring a ring and class.

Lisa Blaber Wallis-Adams organised such a great show and the day was a great success. The sun even decided to shine, which was an added bonus!

It was so lovely to see some of our 'younger' clients in the show ring!

Well done to Harley with 'Bobby' and 'Eccles' who seemed to sweep the floor with rosettes, including winning best 'in hand' and 'ridden' champion! Well done to Millie and little Charlie also, who definitely won our vote for the ultimate 'cute factor' in the 'under 10, best handler class'.

We very much look forward to continuing our support for this great local show in 2022.

Preparing your horse for autumn



Stabling

If your horse has been out 24/7 all summer and they're going to be stabled more often in autumn and winter, make sure the transition to coming inside is gradual so they can adjust to the change in routine.

Start with short periods of stabling, gradually increasing the time spent inside over a period of weeks.

A useful tip: If your horse is reluctant to drink from the bucket in his stable, try filling it up using the water supply in his field, which he's been drinking all summer.

Autumn worming

Targeted worming is essential to reduce the incidence of resistance to wormers and involves only treating your horse when required, based on faecal worm egg counts (FWECs). FWECs should be done every 3-6 months, depending on the horse and its environment. The horse will only need worming if the faeces sample contains a high number of worm eggs.

Tapeworms and encysted cyathostomins (red worms) are difficult to assess based on a FWEC and therefore treatment of 'at risk' patients may be required and should be based on advice from your veterinary surgeon. If your vet thinks your horse is at risk, they may recommend treatment in autumn but not all horses will need de-worming.

Weight Management

How is your horse looking after the summer? Have they lost weight or put on too much?

Now is a great time to body condition score them so you can adjust the feed accordingly.

For a guide assessing your horse's condition, visit:

www.bluecross.org.uk/pet-advice/how-body-score-your-horse

Review your horse's nutritional needs

Whether you have an ex-racehorse or a traditional cob, fibre should be at the centre of any horse's diet.

As temperatures drop, grass growth will slow and its quality will decrease, so it is important to add fibre to your horse's diet to maintain a healthy digestive system. Caution is required as autumn can be surprisingly warm and wet and it is not uncommon to have an autumn flush of grass.

Hay is the most common way of providing your horse with fibre and meeting their nutritional needs.

Do not give your horse hard feed if they do not need it. Feed a balancer instead, which provides the essential vitamins and minerals that a horse needs, without providing extra calories.

Whichever fibre and feed option you choose for your horse, be sure to make any dietary changes slowly to reduce the risk of colic.

Clipping

Most people who exercise their horses over the autumn and winter months tend to have them clipped to minimise sweating and ensure they dry quicker. As we all know, horses can be unpredictable and some can feel anxious about the clipping process. To help keep their handler safe, many horses therefore require sedation for clipping. This can be administered by the owner using an oral syringe (available from your vet practice), or sedation can be given by your vet via intravenous injection. Please note horses can still kick out even when they have been sedated.

Please give us a call if you would like us to come out and sedate your horse.



Mud fever

This time of year puts horses' feet at an increased risk of abscesses and thrush. Mud fever on the lower limbs is also more common during late autumn and winter.

Signs of mud fever include lesions, scabby areas and discharge between the skin. There may also be heat and swelling present. The skin becomes inflamed and looks red and irritated.

Treating mud fever:

- Removal from wet and muddy conditions
- Carefully trim the hair from the affected area
- Remove dirt and scabs using a mild anti-bacterial warm water wash
- Dry very thoroughly
- Speak to your vet who may suggest applying an anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, antibiotic or anti-inflammatory ointment

Make sure you check your horse's feet and legs daily for signs of skin damage, as these conditions are much easier to treat when caught early.

Poisonous plants

There are a number of poisonous plants which can lead to disease in horses. As Autumn arrives, the grass growth starts to slow, and this can lead to horses accidentally ingesting poisonous plants, such as:

- Oak leaves & acorns
- Sycamore seeds/seedlings
- Bracken
- Yew
- Rhododendron
- Buttercups
- Deadly nightshade
- Privet
- Foxglove
- Ivy
- Ragwort



Maintaining a good pasture is essential in minimising the risk of exposure to these toxic plants and it is really important to regularly check your horse's paddock regularly. Removing these plants will prevent your horse from ingesting them.

If you suspect your horse has been poisoned, call your vet immediately. Don't take any risks!

Exercise

If your stabled horse can't be turned out as often during the autumn/winter they will still need regular leg stretches, either in-hand or ridden. Ideally, every horse should be allowed daily turnout in a paddock or arena to move around and have a good roll too!

When exercising your horse during the colder months, it's important to warm them up and cool them down properly. Long hours in the stable may make your horse stiff, and the colder weather means muscles take longer to get going.



Poor Performance in your Horse



Poor performance in horses/ponies can present as an array of issues to the owner, such as reluctance to go forward, reluctance to bend a certain way or struggling when jumping over fences etc. It can occur due to many reasons, with the main reason not always being immediately obvious. It is important to rule out more simple issues first such as: poorly fitting tack, inappropriate diet, lack of fitness or simply limitations of the horse for the type of work being asked of it.

Once these simple issues have been evaluated, it is important to have your horse evaluated by your vet to enable a targeted investigation to take place. Your vet will usually start with a thorough clinical examination including an orthopaedic assessment with a view to tailoring diagnostics depending on what they find.

Here are some examples of what can cause poor performance:

1. Musculoskeletal issues such as **lameness** (which can be low grade and often bilateral (a pair of limbs affected) making it less obvious to the rider), **back or topline pain** and **muscle disorders** e.g. **myopathy**.

Whilst primary causes of back pain can occur e.g. 'Kissing Spines', back pain is more commonly secondary to lameness due to the abnormal loading of the limbs causing discomfort higher up

2. Medical issues such as:

- Cardiovascular disease
- Respiratory disease which can include lower airway disease, such as Equine Asthma or upper airway disease, involving dynamic obstruction of the airways e.g. laryngeal paralysis or dorsal displacement of the soft palate etc
- Gastrointestinal disease including gastric ulcers
- Reproductive issues, particularly in mares

3. Infectious or metabolic diseases: Chronic viral infections can lead to post-viral syndrome and potentially anaemia. Metabolic diseases such as **Pars Pituitary Intermediate Dysfunction (PPID)** aka **Cushing's Disease** and **Liver Disease** can make horses lethargic.

5. Dental pain or biting issues



Prompt investigation, diagnosis and treatment will help towards the best outcome.

If you are concerned that your horse is not performing as it should be, then please call the practice to ask for advice and book an appointment with one of our vets.