

A VERY FOND FAREWELL TO JANETTE

At the beginning of May, we said farewell to Janette as she steps back from Kings Bounty to take a well-earned career break.

Janette set up Kings Bounty Equine Practice in 2009 and since then it has grown and developed into a thriving ambulatory practice.

We wish her all the best and hope she finds time now to recharge the batteries especially before the big day in July!

We arranged a fabulous last day for her, with the help of some of our lovely clients, who took her on a carriage drive around West Tisted.

We will undoubtedly miss her but will continue to follow and develop her vision for the practice.



Thank you to Roger and Sam from Grayswood Carriage Driving Centre for going above and beyond to help us make Janette's last day so special.

UKRAINE FUNDRAISER

We are delighted to announce that the client evening led by Amy with a guest appearance from **Rowan Willis** raised an incredible **£350** for the **Ukraine Red Cross Appeal**.

We hope those of you that were able to attend found the evening enjoyable and informative.

Of course, we must also say a big thank you to Rowan for taking the time out of his busy schedule to talk to us about his successful show jumping career and thank you to all our clients who supported the event.

We hope to be able to run more client education evenings in the future, so please keep an eye on our Facebook page for any updates about future events.



Back pain in horses, a common cause of poor performance

Back pain is often investigated as a cause of poor performance in horses. It can involve bony, muscular and ligamentous pathologies and can either be primary or secondary to lameness.



Horses with back pain can present with a variety of clinical signs. An accurate clinical history from the owner is vital to ascertain when the signs arise and if there is a pattern or common scenario that causes the signs e.g. a particular saddle, certain rider etc.

Initially, we will examine the horse at rest.

Palpation of the horse at rest enables us to assess:

- The horse's conformation
- Any abnormalities on palpation of the limbs that could be causing lameness
- Symmetry of the horse—is there any evidence of muscle atrophy?
- Neck range of motion. Any thickening of the cervical facet joints in the neck?
- Any evidence of midline pain
- Any evidence of muscular tension/spasm in the thoracolumbar and sacroiliac region

After this, a standard orthopaedic examination is carried out. This includes: a trot up, flexion tests and lungeing on both reins on a hard and soft surface. Horses with back pain may show one or more of the following:

- Boarding/guarding through the back and a stiff gait
- Reluctance to lower the head and neck
- Lack of impulsion
- 'Bunny hopping' gait of the hindlimbs in the canter

If it is safe to do so, horses will often be assessed ridden. Observing the horse being tacked up and mounted is a useful exercise to see if there is any evidence of pain or evasive behaviour. When assessing horses ridden, we will evaluate the horse for any evidence of lameness, gait abnormality, resistance to work on the bit, evasive behaviours and whether there are any difficulties with transitions or specific movements. It can be useful to have the horse ridden by more

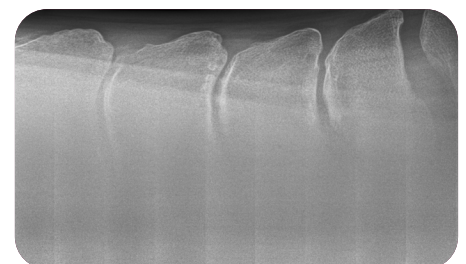
than one rider to see if the clinical signs are consistent.

What causes back pain?

Common causes of back pain in horses are:

- Impinging dorsal spinous processes (also called Kissing Spines- see image below).
- Sacroiliac joint disease
- Muscle pain/damage/soft tissue damage. This can be as simple as being caused by an ill fitting saddle
- Vertebral body articular process joint disease

Other less common causes include vertebral body fractures, intervertebral disc prolapses and rib fractures.



How do we investigate it further?

Diagnostic imaging is useful in investigating causes of back pain.

Radiographs (X-rays) enable us to assess the DSPs and see if there is any evidence of impinging DSPs or fractures. Radiographs can also be used to assess the vertebral bodies and articular process joints, however due to the large size of horses and their heavy muscling, these usually need to be taken in a hospital with a gantry mounted, high output generator to obtain sufficient images.

Ultrasound can be used to assess the articular facet joints in the back, e.g. assess for signs of osteoarthritis and to also assess the soft tissue structures for injury, e.g. supraspinous ligament or dorsal ligaments of the sacroiliac joint.

Nuclear scintigraphy (bone scan) is a useful imaging modality for investigating back pain. It is often used when radiographic images cannot easily be obtained, i.e. issues with the pelvis, to confirm the significance of radiographic abnormalities or if violent behaviour under saddle does not allow the safe use of diagnostic analgesia.

If diagnostic imaging shows abnormalities, diagnostic analgesia (instilling local anaesthetic in/around the area with changes) can be carried out to determine the significance of the abnormalities by assessing the horse moving before and after the injections.

What happens after diagnosis?

Once the cause of back pain has been determined, a treatment plan can be formulated.

Conservative treatment is often preferred as the first line of approach and in some cases, e.g. sacroiliac issues, is the only treatment option.

Conservative treatment includes:

- Exercise modification
- Systemic medication:

Anti-inflammatories – mainly useful in the case of a primary muscle injury or sprain

Bisphosphonate Drugs - inhibit the cells involved in bone resorption, a process that is considered painful, therefore bisphosphonates alleviate this pain

- Local medication e.g. corticosteroids, have anti-inflammatory and analgesic (pain relief) properties and can be injected either intraarticularly (into a joint) or perilesionally (around the lesion). Sarapin is another analgesic agent that is derived from the pitcher plant. It has been used for the management of neuromuscular pain in humans and can be used in conjunction with corticosteroids to provide analgesia (pain relief)



- Mesotherapy, which involves injecting small amounts of medication into the 'mesoderm' (deeper layers) of the skin via small needles. The purpose of mesotherapy is to stop the vicious cycle of pain and restricted mobility in a certain area which in isolation or in combination

with other treatments can help restore normal function and movement

- Complementary therapy e.g. physiotherapy, acupuncture and chiropractic technique
- Surgery - There are several surgical options for treatment of impinging DSPs however there are no surgical options for managing arthritis of the articular process joints or sacroiliac disease.
- Surgical techniques for the management of impinging

DSPs aim to reduce the degree of impingement physically, consequently removing the pain caused by bone rubbing on bone

Surgical options include:

- Ostectomy of the affected DSP whereby the summit of the DSP is removed. This can be done under standing sedation or under general anaesthetic
- Cranial wedge ostectomy where only the cranial third of the DSP is resected
- Desmotomy of the interspinous ligaments, a less invasive technique, which involves cutting the interspinous ligaments between the DSPs to allow the DSPs to move further apart

It must be noted that in some cases, even with surgical correction, horses may still demonstrate signs of back pain, suggesting that some of the signs are due to a learnt behaviour in the anticipation of pain.



Equine insurance

These notes have been prepared for information purposes only to assist owners in understanding the various types of insurance cover that are available for their horses.

Purpose of insurance

The old adage 'don't purchase a horse unless you can afford the loss and the purchase price' may still be correct but other unforeseen costs may arise.

The purchase of any insurance cover is to protect the policyholder against unexpected loss. With horses this loss may take various forms including accidental injury, death, veterinary treatment or injury to third parties. There are many types of policy cover available and these will vary from company to company. As a general rule, you get what you pay for and the difference in premiums charged by the insurance companies usually reflects the different levels of cover. It is, of course, the responsibility of the owner to ensure that the cover they take out is adequate for their needs. If in doubt they should consult their independent insurance broker or obtain several quotations and compare the price, levels of cover and service offered.

Specific types of cover

Third Party Insurance

This will cover the horse against claims resulting from injury to other persons or property. For example, if your horse breaks out of a field and causes a car crash or if your pony kicks a child in the livery yard at which he is stabled, then the owners of the car or the parents of the child might sue you for damages. If this is the case, these claims would be covered by a third party insurance policy. This level of insurance is considered absolutely essential for all animal owners and may well be provided by your own household insurance cover and BHS membership/ membership to equestrian organisations.

All risks mortality

Also known as Accidental Death. This covers the horse against claims for the value of the animal in case of death by severe disease or accident. It is a limited form of insurance and does not normally, for example, cover the loss of a horse after prolonged treatment

such as navicular disease or arthritis. Policies vary but in essence the horse is only covered if it is found dead or if it has to be humanely destroyed as a matter of emergency due to an excessive and incurable condition such as a broken leg or incurable colic.

Owners must be aware that this is a limited form of insurance with many exclusions. Many insurance companies will require a 2-stage vetting certificate before this cover is granted.

Veterinary Fee Cover

This cover will reimburse the owner for non-routine veterinary treatment following accident or illness to their horse. The amount of cover available for each incident will depend on the various policies and is designed to provide cover for the unexpected costs of treatment following disease, accident or injury. Owners should ensure that the total available for any one incident is sufficient to cover the worst possible scenario. Current figures

would suggest that it is prudent to insure your horse or pony for at least £5,000 per incident to cover the majority of major treatment available. Limited cover for only a few hundred pounds or even £1,000 will not, in the event of a more serious condition, such as colic surgery, provide the cover that you hope for. Taking out such cover enables your horse to benefit from the major advances in veterinary medicine and surgery that have been made over the last few decades. It is not uncommon following an injury for the insurance company to put an exclusion on any new policy for that condition.

Catastrophic Vet Fees

This is insurance against severe and potentially expensive vet fees, usually between £500 - £5,000. It has a considerably higher excess to pay, however it does lower your premium.

Loss of Use Cover

This cover will reimburse you for the loss of your horse if it is no longer able to perform its stated insured use following accident, illness or disease. Strictly speaking, there are at least two forms of loss of use cover currently available and owners should be clear in their own mind which they require before they take out an insurance policy. The cheaper form does not provide the same level of cover as the more comprehensive type of policy. The full loss of use cover provides protection against the effects of any accident, illness or disease leading to your horse becoming permanently unable to carry out the previously agreed roles for which you have insured the horse. It is important that when you take out your policy you inform the company exactly what activities you will be doing with your horse. These policies will offer you

varying amounts of the horse's total insured value if the horse is no longer able to event, for example, but may still be able to hack satisfactorily.

It is now a condition of all insurers that any horse that is the subject of a loss of use claim will be positively identified by a freeze brand, which is a white "L" within a circle".

When should you insure?

It is always a wise and cost efficient decision to ask an experienced veterinary surgeon to examine the horse prior to purchase and to advise you as to your chosen horse's suitability for your particular use. This form of examination may also be very useful when proposing your horse for insurance cover. Do be aware however, that it is perfectly possible that a horse may "pass" a vetting yet an insurance company may make various exclusions on the cover available, due to pre-existing conditions. If in any doubt you are strongly advised to obtain satisfactory insurance cover prior to purchasing your horse.

Depending on the value of the horse, some companies may request either an annual veterinary examination and/or an owner's declaration of health before the horse is re-insured. It is worth noting that horse insurance policies run for one year and if renewed are a separate contract. Unlike medical insurance they do not at the present time run automatically for the life of the horse. This means that if a horse sustains an injury you have one year's worth of veterinary treatment for this condition even if you are onto a new policy.

Your insurance cover for your horse is a legal contract between you, the proposer, and the

insurance company. It is based on the fact that all known facts have been declared and your policy may be invalidated if you do not disclose all pertinent facts that you know or should have known before you insure. If in any doubt it is necessary to discuss any matters that may be relevant before you take out the policy. Further information should be available from either your insurance broker or from the individual insurance companies concerned.

When and how should you make a claim?

It is your duty as a policy holder to inform the insurance company as soon as possible that your horse has been injured, lost or is suffering from an illness or disease. Once notified, varying insurance companies may initiate different procedures but they will all ask you to show that you have actually sustained a loss (i.e. documentary evidence of veterinary fees already paid) and they may well ask you and your veterinary surgeon to complete an appropriate claim form. You should note that the insured policy holder is only covered for a loss already sustained and legally cannot therefore claim for veterinary fees that have not yet been paid. However most insurance companies will, with prior notification, work together with the insured to minimise the distress and inconvenience of any loss.

Disclaimer

This material is in no way intended to replace professional veterinary care or attention from a professional veterinary surgeon. We advise that you should always consult a veterinary surgeon about any queries with horses under your care.

Project Worms

Working together to tackle wormer resistance

Deworming advice for horses and ponies has changed a lot over recent years because of increasing resistance of worms to dewormers (anthelmintics), and what we now know to be unnecessary overuse of dewormers.



We recommend a more targeted approach to deworming, with the use of faecal worm egg counts, tapeworm saliva/ blood tests and deworming only if necessary. The aim of a targeted deworming plan is to prevent clinical disease, while minimising the selection pressure for resistance.

What are the benefits of a targeted deworming plan?

- Reduces anthelmintic resistance
 - Four out of five dewormers are given unnecessarily
 - Anthelmintic resistance is already widespread due to over-use of dewormers
- Healthier for your horse
 - For every 10 grazing adult horses, only one or two will need deworming (20% of horses tend to carry 80% of the worm burden)
 - A low level of parasites may actually help the immune system
- It is beneficial for the environment
- Proven to save you money
- Identifies horses with persistently high worm burdens, which may be an indicator for other disease processes, e.g. Equine Cushing's

Why you need a targeted plan?

- Resistance has been identified in the most prevalent types of parasites, to all classes of anthelmintics
- There are no new classes of anthelmintics being developed for horses
- Worm damage in horses can result in weight loss, poor performance, diarrhoea, colic and occasionally death
- According to studies, most horses are being dewormed too frequently and with inappropriate products and/ or doses
- Experts agree that the traditional approach to deworming (at pre-determined intervals) is misguided and has led to anthelmintic resistance

What is anthelmintic resistance?

Anthelmintic resistance means that a high proportion of parasites which are picked up from the pasture are not killed after administration of a suitable dewormer.

There are three reasons why this occurs:

1. Using dewormers too frequently – this results in worms being killed before they reach sexual maturity.

Therefore, only those who are genetically resistant will breed and produce more worms, which will also be resistant

2. Under-dosing due to incorrect assessment of weight – this helps partially resistant worms to survive. They then breed, adding to the proportion of resistant worms
3. Repeatedly using the same type of dewormer – this applies selection pressure on the worms and encourages resistance to develop quicker to that dewormer

Once resistance occurs it cannot be reversed. As these drugs become ineffective it will lead to a rise in worm related disease. We do not currently have any new dewormers available for use, so we must protect and preserve the ones we do have.

By carrying out strategic deworming, we maintain a population of worms that are sensitive to anthelmintics in refugia (not exposed to treatment i.e. worms on pasture or in untreated horses). This reduces selection pressures and breeds less resistant genes back into the worm population.

How to collect a faecal worm egg count sample

1. Collect your faecal sample at the appropriate time of year, as discussed with your vet (usually every 12 weeks between March–October)
2. Using a glove, take a large pinch from three different areas of a fresh pile of faeces. In total we need approximately a golf ball sized amount of faeces
3. Place the faeces into a sample bag, expel the air and seal the bag
4. Ensure your details, including name, contact number, horse name, age, date of the last deworming and the product used are provided with the sample
5. Either drop the sample off at our clinic, or post first class for next day delivery
6. If there is any delay in posting, then keep the sample refrigerated or in a cool place
7. One of our vets will ring you to discuss the result as soon as it is available and advise on the most appropriate dewormer, if necessary

Usually we will advise deworming any horse with a WEC over 200 - 250 eggs per gram, however this may differ depending on several factors, and so you should always follow your vet's advice.

How to test if your property has anthelmintic resistance

This is a very useful test on properties with large numbers of horses, and for those horses with particularly high worm egg counts.

1. Collect faeces for a worm egg count (WEC) from all horses to be tested (ideally every horse on the property)

2. Any horse with a worm egg count of over 200-250 eggs per gram (epg) should be dewormed with the chosen anthelmintic. Ensure an accurate dose of dewormer is given. If you are using a weigh tape, administer 10% more than the estimated weight (e.g. 500kg on weight tape, administer 550kg dose)
3. 14 days later collect faecal samples from the horses who were dewormed for a second WEC
4. Your vet will calculate the reduction in worm eggs, and advise you if resistance is present on your property

How to reduce the worm burden on your property

- Poo pick regularly – ideally daily, but at least twice per week
- Avoid harrowing/spreading horse muck on pastures grazed by horses
- Avoid overgrazing and overstocking, rest pastures regularly (best done in hot weather)
- Keep muck heaps away from fields which are grazed, as worms can migrate many meters
- Prevent development of rough areas where horses regularly defecate as this can serve as a reservoir of worms
- Co-graze or rotationally graze pastures with sheep and cattle
- Worm new arrivals who have an unknown deworming history with moxidectin + praziquantel and quarantine for three days before turnout. This allows eggs present in the gastro-intestinal tract to be excreted
- Avoid moving horses onto clean pasture within two weeks of deworming – this

results in all resistant worms moving with them, and all non-resistant worms being left behind

- Muck out stables regularly, particularly those belonging to foals and weanlings
- Consult your vet for the best approach to worming in broodmares and young stock
- It's important to remember that a low level of worms in horses is completely normal and may be beneficial in reducing anthelmintic resistance

Project WORMS recognises that veterinary teams and owners need to work together to tackle resistance to worming products. A responsible approach to the use of wormers is crucial to maximise animal welfare and ensure we have effective products available in the future.

You can help by completing a short questionnaire to tell us how you currently control worms in your horses. The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete, and there is a separate survey aimed at stud owners/managers that takes around 20 minutes. Your responses are anonymous, but you can put your details into a prize draw to win £100 of 'Love to Shop' vouchers.

The information from the surveys will help us to help horse owners and keepers improve worming practices in the future.

For more information and to access the surveys, please click [here](#).

