

### Summer Pony Club talks and event cover

Amy has spent the summer visiting several branches of the Pony Club and British Driving Society Junior camps over the summer to talk to the children about equine first aid, worming and equine emergencies.

The talks have been very successful and feedback from the pony clubs involved has been excellent.

Liz has also been busy out and about providing cover for the local Hampshire British Driving Society senior camp and also providing on site veterinary cover for the Hampshire BDS show in the New Forest.

If you think your pony club, riding club or yard may be interested in a talk by one of our vets, or if you require veterinary cover for an event or show, then please contact the office on 01420 520164 to discuss or ask one of our vets when you next see them.



### What is your horse's body condition

If your horse or pony is overweight, it can predispose them to serious conditions including laminitis and Equine Metabolic Syndrome (EMS).

Excessive weight can also increase the risk of arthritis, tendon/ ligament injuries and put added strain on the heart and lungs. By taking action to help your horse lose weight you will be improving their health and quality of life!

Why not ask our vets about your horse's weight the next time they visit so that they can work with you to improve your horse's diet and management.

Amy is representing The Horse Trust's Healthiest Body Condition Awards at the Royal Artillery Equestrian Centre's Summer Show at Thorney Island on 24th September 2023. Horses in selected classes will be assessed by Amy and their body condition scored, with the most healthy horse being awarded a rosette.



We are also excited to be sponsoring the Mountain and Moorland Ridden Championship at the show! If you are going to be there, please come and say hello!

### Northington Stables Summer Dog Show

Amy was asked to judge the dog show classes at Northington Stables Summer Show at the end of August. It was a fantastic day with a great turnout and all the handlers and dogs had a wonderful time. Classes ranged from most handsome dog, to judge's favourite, to a very entertaining 'musical sit' competition! It was great to see so many familiar faces there and to meet their four-legged friends!





# ATYPICAL MYOPATHY

## What is Atypical Myopathy?

Atypical myopathy is a severe and potentially fatal disease that occurs following ingestion of sycamore trees including leaves, seedlings and fallen seeds. Sadly in Autumn, cases of Atypical Myopathy are higher due to falling leaves and seeds.

Sycamore contains the toxin Hypoglycin A, build up of this toxin in the horse reduces energy production in muscles including the heart.

### Clinical Signs:

In the early stages of the disease, horses may present with:

- Generalised weakness
- Inability to walk
- Depression and lethargy
- Elevated respiratory and heart rate
- Signs of severe colic (however the horse will still have an appetite)
- Red or dark brown urine

As the disease progresses or in acutely severe cases horses may be found recumbent and unable to stand.

## Diagnosing Atypical Myopathy:

Often a presumptive diagnosis is able to be made based on the presenting clinical signs and knowledge of access to Sycamore trees. Blood samples will be taken to assess muscle damage measure the level of toxin in the blood and urine samples will be caught for analysis is possible. In the case of a confirmed case, blood samples can be taken from other horses kept in the same environment to test the levels of toxin in their blood and help determine their risk of developing disease.

## Treatment:

Treatment for Atypical Myopathy involves pain relief and intensive fluid therapy to help flush the toxins from the horse's blood stream. Often horses require referral to a hospital as intensive treatment may be necessary for some days.

## Prognosis:

Sadly, Atypical Myopathy is fatal for around 75% of affected horses. If horses respond to treatment over the first few days then they usually go on to recover fully, however some horses may take months to recover.

## Prevention:

The best way to prevent Atypical Myopathy is to remove all sycamore trees from your horse's environment. The seeds can travel around 180 metres in the wind so you should also speak to neighbouring properties to ascertain the presence of nearby trees.

All fallen leaves and seeds should be removed regularly from grazing areas and if trees cannot be cut then they should be fenced off to prevent access.

In high risk areas, provide plenty of supplementary forage in Autumn to reduce risk of seed ingestion during grazing and if possible use hay nets or feeders so that the forage is off the ground.

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If you would like any further information about Atypical Myopathy please give us a call on 01420 520 164 or have a read of our fact sheet on our website:

[kingsbountyequine.co.uk](http://kingsbountyequine.co.uk)

# AUTUMN WORMING:

## *Do you need to worm your horse?*

Traditionally autumn is a time when horses are wormed but this should not be done without careful thought. In order to preserve the effectiveness of wormers and prevent worms from becoming resistant to them we must minimise the amount of wormer that is used and restrict the use of certain types of wormer.

Most horses will need treating for cyathostomin (red worm) larvae in the Autumn. These worms are commonly resistant to certain wormers so please contact us if you want to ensure you are using the correct type of wormer.

Horses also need to be checked or treated for tapeworms once or twice per year and Autumn is a good time to do this. A tapeworm saliva test, which can be performed at home by owners, detects tapeworm specific antibodies in saliva, and gives a result of low, borderline or high, which then allows targeted treatment for those who need it. Results are reported to your vet who can then discuss your individual horse's needs, and if necessary the most appropriate wormer.

*Remember, if your vet thinks your horse is at risk, they may recommend treatment in autumn but not all horses will need deworming.*



# CUSHING'S DISEASE (PPID): TIME TO TEST

## *If your horse or pony is prone to laminitis, it's important to test for PPID.*

The simplest and most common test for PPID is the ACTH test. A blood sample is taken which is then sent chilled to a lab and is measured for ACTH concentration. Horse's that are affected will have higher than normal ACTH levels.

The reference range for ACTH changes with the season to allow for the summer/autumn increase in pituitary activity which takes effect from late June until mid November.

It's important to note that while autumn is generally the recommended time for PPID testing, individual cases may vary. If a horse displays symptoms of PPID or if the owner has concerns about the horse's health, testing can be conducted at any time of the year.

**Some of the common symptoms of PPID include:**

- Abnormal coat
- Excessive sweating
- Increased thirst/urination/appetite
- Muscle wasting
- Lethargy/weakness
- Delayed shedding of winter coat
- Recurrent infections
- Changes in behaviour





# WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN BUYING A HORSE

*Essential factors to consider when purchasing a horse*

**When buying a horse, there are several important factors to consider to ensure you make an informed and responsible decision. Purchasing a horse is a significant commitment, both financially and in terms of care, so taking the time to thoroughly assess your options is essential.**

Here are some key points to look for when buying a horse:

## **Purpose and goals:**

Are you looking for a leisure riding horse or a competition horse? Your goals will help determine the breed, age, and training level that best suits your needs.

## **Experience and skill level:**

Choose a horse with a temperament and training level that matches your abilities. A novice rider might require a well-trained, gentle horse, while an experienced rider could handle a horse with more energy and potential.

## **Breed and conformation:**

Research different horse breeds and their characteristics. Consider the horse's conformation as it can affect soundness and performance.

## **Health and soundness:**

A pre-purchase veterinary examination (PPE) is crucial to assess the horse's overall health, soundness, and any potential medical issues.

## **Age:**

Younger horses might require more training and have unpredictable development, while older horses could have more health concerns. Choose an age that suits your experience and goals.

## **Training and behaviour:**

Evaluate the horse's training level and behaviour. A well-trained horse with good manners and a willing attitude will likely be easier to handle and work with, especially for less experienced riders.

## **History and background:**

Obtain as much information as possible about the horse's history, including previous owners, training, medical records, and any behavioural issues.

## **Legalities and documentation:**

Ensure all necessary legal documentation, such as ownership transfer and health records, are properly handled. This helps prevent any future disputes and ensures a smooth transition of ownership.

## **Passport/Microchip:**

Horses must not be sold on without a passport and microchip. It is a legal requirement that all horses, ponies and donkeys in the UK must have an equine passport and microchip - even if they are retired or do not ever leave their field.

**Please contact the practice to discuss booking in a PPE.**

*Take your time, do thorough research, and don't hesitate to ask questions before making your final decision. The well-being and happiness of both you and the horse depend on making the right choice.*



# WHAT'S INVOLVED IN A LAMENESS EXAMINATION?

## History and observation:

The vet begins by gathering information about the horse's medical history, previous injuries, exercise routine, and any recent changes in behaviour. They observe the horse's gait at rest, looking for any noticeable abnormalities, asymmetries, or signs of discomfort.

## Palpation and manipulation:

The vet examines the horse's limbs, muscles, joints, and other relevant areas through palpation and manipulation. They look for signs of swelling, heat, pain, or sensitivity. By applying pressure and flexing or extending joints, they can assess the range of motion and identify any areas of discomfort.

## Flexion tests:

Flexion tests involve applying controlled stress to specific joints by flexing them for a specified period. This helps to detect subtle lameness that may not be apparent during regular movement. The vet observes the horse's gait immediately after releasing the flexed joint to see if any lameness becomes more pronounced.

## Walk and trot in hand and lunging:

The horse is then evaluated in motion. The vet will ask the horse to walk and trot in a straight line on a hard surface, observing its movement from different angles. They look for irregularities in the gait, such as head-bobbing, short strides, dragging of the toes, or changes in the rhythm. In some cases, the horse may be lunged on a circle to further assess its gait and lameness under different conditions.

## Diagnostic blocks:

If the source of lameness remains unclear, the vet may use diagnostic nerve or joint blocks. This involves injecting a local anaesthetic into specific nerves or joints to temporarily numb the area. By selectively blocking different areas, the vet can identify the exact location of the lameness. If the lameness improves after a specific block, it suggests that the blocked region is the source of the problem.

## Imaging and diagnostics:

In certain cases, additional diagnostic tests may be necessary to obtain a more detailed evaluation. This can include radiographs (X-rays), ultrasound, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), or computed tomography (CT) scans. These tests help visualise the bones, joints, ligaments, and soft tissues, providing valuable insights into the nature and extent of the problem.

## Diagnosis and treatment plan:

Based on the findings from the lameness examination, the vet makes a diagnosis and develops a tailored treatment plan. The plan may include medication, rest, physical therapy, corrective shoeing, joint injections, or surgery, depending on the underlying cause and severity of the lameness.



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