Tel: 01928 787500

Spring Newsletter

Client Evening - Equine Emergencies and First Aid

We are pleased to announce our next client evening will be taking place at 7.30pm on Wednesday June 11th at Cuddington and Sandiway Village Hall. The evening is kindly being sponsored by Zoetis and will cover areas such as equine emergencies (when to call the vet) and first aid that you can do yourself. If you would like to attend the evening please contact Catherine in the office on 01928 787500.

Practice news

Congratulations to Alice, one of our vets, who ran the Wilmslow Half Marathon raising money for the British Heart Foundation. She completed it in 1 hour and 56 minutes and wishes to thank everyone for their support, with a special thank you to Peter for the miles he has run with her during her training!

New Free App for iPhone - Horse Dialog

Zoetis have supported a new iPhone app to help manage the health of your horse and connect you to the practice. The app has lots of useful information and helps you keep track of your horse's vaccinations. For information on how to download the app ask one of the vets for a card or contact the office on 01928 787500 for the id code.

Laminitis

Laminitis is an extremely painful disease which can be devastating to see and is potentially life threatening to the horse.

It involves inflammation of the sensitive laminae within the hoof capsule which are interlinked with each other suspending the pedal bone within the hoof capsule. When the laminae become inflamed they stretch and some may lose the links between each other causing the pedal bone to rotate within the hoof capsule.

Despite extensive research the exact cause of laminitis is still not fully understood. There are multiple factors contributing to laminitis making it a complicated disease. Risk factors include**:**

- **Obesity** - particularly changes in grazing such as summer pastures
- **Endocrine disease** such as Equine Cushing's syndrome and Equine Metabolic Syndrome
- **Grain overload**

If laminitis is detected early and treatment begun promptly the outcome can be successful, in severe or recurring cases treatment is often more difficult and prolonged. If you suspect any signs of laminitis ring your vet immediately. Mild laminitis may present with foot soreness (he 'feels' his feet) particularly on hard or stony ground and heat within the feet. Severe laminitis presents with reluctance to move, the classic rocking horse stance and unwilling to lift feet. Whilst waiting for the vet to arrive provide a big deep bed for your horse covering the entire stable floor. You can also begin to soak your hay as dietary management plays an important role in treating laminitis. There are several feed products approved for laminitic horses, it is best to seek advice from your vet or nutritionalist on dietary management.

Treatment usually involves pain relief, box rest and support for the foot in the way of foot pads and heart bar shoes. Corrective farriery is essential in treating laminitis, radiographs taken of the foot before shoeing helps the farrier shoe correctly. It is important for your horse to grow good quality hoof so we advise a feed supplement to promote healthy hoof growth such as our own Hoof Aid or Farrier's Formula. Blood samples may also be taken if we suspect an underlying hormonal problem such as equine metabolic syndrome or Cushing's.

Treatment of laminitis can be long and frustrating, and prevention is much better than cure to prevent any changes occurring within the hoof. If you feel your horse is at risk of Equine Metabolic Syndrome or Cushing's contact us to arrange a blood sample to begin treatment early.

Worming

Every horse is exposed to parasitic worms and we all know that a program of worm control is necessary but if the number of worms a horse has is small they cause them no harm. High levels of worms can, however, cause illness. Symptoms include weight loss, diarrhoea, and poor body condition. If the number of worms is high it can cause colic signs.

Most worms follow a similar life cycle. The horse eats the worm larvae off the pasture and the larvae develop into adults inside the horse ending up in the horse's intestines. Eggs are produced by the adults which then pass on to the pasture in the droppings and the cycle continues.

The main types of worms found are:

1. **Small red worms** (cyathostomes)

Theses worms differ slightly in their life cycle in that they can hibernate as larvae in the wall of the intestine over winter. In spring they can then emerge and continue developing into adults. This hibernation allows these worms to become resistant to some drugs in wormers. As the worms emerge from the wall of the intestine they can damage the wall leading to colic which can potentially be fatal.

2. **Large red worms** (strongyles)

These worms follow the typical life style. It is uncommon to see any problems unless high numbers of larvae are migrating through the body to the intestines. Strongyle eggs are seen under the microscope in droppings samples. Low levels of worms are well tolerated but higher levels can lead to poor condition and colic.

3. **Tapeworms** (Cestodes)

These tend to cause problems in high numbers, the most common clinical signs being weight loss and colic.

4. **Pinworm** (Oxyuris)

Increasing numbers of them are being seen. The adults emerge from the anus and lay their eggs on the skin around the anus. This causes intense irritation around the horse's anus and often horses are seen itching and scratching at their back end (this can be mistaken for sweet itch). Often lifting the tail shows streaks of yellow slime which is typical of pinworm.

5. **Lungworm** (Dictyocaulus arnfieldi)

Donkeys often have lungworm without showing any symptoms and therefore can infect horses when they are grazing together. It is important to treat both horses and donkeys against lungworm in this instance.

6. **Ascarids**

These worms are often seen in youngsters and it is important to worm against them.

Due to the over use of wormers in recent years we are seeing increased resistance of worms to some of the drugs found in wormers. This leads to a small population of resistant worms remaining in the horse which then reproduce creating more drug resistant worms. We therefore encourage correct and sensible use of wormers which can be achieved by performing faecal egg counts on your horse's faeces and only worming if the result is over 200 eggs per gram. This enables us to only treat affected horses therefore reducing the over use of wormers.

Worm egg counts are best done in spring and autumn. We can perform worm egg counts in the practice and results are usually with you the same day. Only a small amount of poo is needed and we ask this to be dropped off in a labeled freezer bag.

0-100eggs per gram is negative. We would recommend re sampling in 6 months
100-200eggs per gram is positive. We would recommend re sampling in 3 months
>200eggs per gram is positive. We would recommend worming.

Treatment advice for a worm egg count depends on the number of eggs found per gram of faeces.
Unfortunately to test for tapeworm a blood sample is required so we usually suggest either a sample being taken, perhaps at routine vaccination, or worming against tapeworm once yearly for adults and twice yearly for horses under 5 years old and to the older horse.

In order for this method of worm control to be effective other management strategies need to be included such as removing droppings from the pasture.