



Tel: 01928 787500

# Winter Newsletter

## Practice news

We had a fantastic evening at Sandiway and Cuddington Village Hall for our last client evening discussing Equine Emergencies and First Aid. The First Aid kits featured at the evening are still on sale. We were also pleased to launch our new iPhone app sponsored by Zoetis that enables you to organize and record all your horse's appointments such as vaccination reminders, farrier visits and worming among other details. It is free to download from the App store and for help getting started visit the News section of our website or ask a vet for help when they are next on the yard.

We have recently purchased a new gastroscope for the practice so we are now able to perform gastroscopies for those horses suspected to be suffering from gastric ulcers. We will begin to run Gastroscopy clinics in our fully equipped examination room at the practice in the New Year.



## Vaccination Card Competition

As many of you will have seen we recently ran a competition on our Facebook page to find the face of our new vaccination cards. We had a huge

amount of entries and it was hard for our judge from MSD to choose from so many great pictures, but congratulations to Shaun Guest, Geoff Morley and Eric Domanski.

## Keeping Britain's Horses Healthy



Keeping Britain's Horses Healthy (KBHH) is a national campaign that has been launched to educate horse owners about endemic infectious diseases, vaccination, herd immunity and the role that effective biosecurity can play in improving the health of horses, both locally and nationally.

The campaign is backed by a number of leading horse organisations and everyone here at the practice. For details of the campaign refer to the KBHH website – [www.healthyhorses.co.uk](http://www.healthyhorses.co.uk) – which also includes information on how to enter the national photo competition to find Britain's greatest horse!

In spite of vaccination being one of the simplest and most effective ways owners can protect their horses against disease, it is estimated that less than 50% of Britain's estimated one million horses are vaccinated against equine influenza (EI), while the figures for herpes and strangles are even lower. To prevent the spread of infectious diseases such as EI, herd vaccination levels need to be around 70% and effective biosecurity is essential.

## Vet Essentials

For those of you that saw the documentary series on Horse and Country TV we hope you found it informative. The three part series investigated laminitis, colic and Equine Cushing's disease, offering owners tips and advice to avoid the conditions and keep their horses in optimal health. Keep checking our Facebook page for information on upcoming events.

## Gastric ulcers

Equine gastric ulcers occur when there is an erosion of the stomach lining caused by a prolonged period of exposure of the stomach lining to acid. Horses are designed to be grazing animals continuously eating so they constantly secrete acid into their stomachs in order to digest this food. If horses spend prolonged periods of

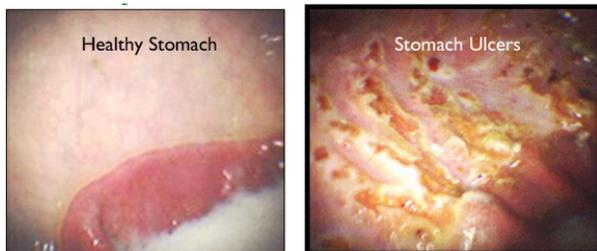
time without food this acid is still continuously produced but there is nothing inside the stomach to neutralize it so it can begin to damage the stomach lining.

The equine stomach is divided into two areas which have different linings. The squamous mucosa; the top part of the stomach and the glandular mucosa; the lower part of the stomach. Damage to the squamous part of the stomach usually occurs as a direct result of acid damage, whereas glandular damage due to a defect in the protective layer of the stomach which can be side-effect of some medications.

Clinical signs of gastric ulceration include;

- Behavioural changes
- Weight loss
- Recurrent colic
- Poor appetite
- Poor body condition

Gastric ulcers can be easily diagnosed by gastroscopy whereby a camera is passed up the horse's nose and down their oesophagus into their stomach. We are then able to visualise the lining of their stomach and identify any ulcers present. Ulcers are graded on a scale of 1 to 4 depending on their severity.



Ulcers can be easily treated with medication and preventative methods, such as reducing stress, allowing a constant supply of hay/haylage and reducing the amount of feed high in carbohydrates can reduce their occurrence. If you are worried your horse may be suffering from gastric ulcers call the office to discuss this with one of the vets.

## Tetanus

Tetanus is a condition caused by the bacterium *Clostridium tetani* found in soil. Horses are very susceptible to this bacterium which gains entry to the body via wounds, very commonly through foot penetrations. It has a very high mortality rate of around 90% but is easily preventable with

vaccination. As a practice we have seen a worrying number of cases over the past 12 months and



would like to remind everyone of the severity of this disease and the fact that it is preventable. Treatment offers the best prognosis when initiated as soon as possible so if you suspect any of the following clinical signs call us immediately.

Clinical signs of tetanus include;

- Muscle stiffness and reluctance to move
- 'lock jaw'
- Flaring of the nostrils
- Startled expression
- Erect ears
- Elevated tail

For horses to be fully covered against tetanus they require two primary vaccinations 4 – 6 weeks apart and then bi-annual boosters. For those owners who choose not to vaccinate against Equine Influenza we still strongly recommend to vaccinate against tetanus, no matter how old the horse or its previous vaccination history.

When attending wounds we always check the immune status of your horse as if not already vaccinated against tetanus we can administer the antitoxin to provide cover. This is also given to foals at their first clinical exam post foaling. We recommend giving pregnant mares a booster vaccination of Equine Influenza and Tetanus in their last month of pregnancy so that the antibodies will be present in the mare's milk when the foal suckles at birth.

As always please telephone the office on 01928 787500 if you have any concerns about your horse and the possibility it may be showing signs of tetanus.

