



WENSUM VALLEY VETS NEWSLETTER

New Ovacyte Worm Egg Counting Machine

The practice has invested in a state-of-the-art worm egg counting machine which can identify the species of worm present as well as giving a very precise reading of the eggs per gram present in the faecal sample. This automated process is significantly more precise than the previous method of manually counting and is available for one-off worm egg counts or as part of **our worming scheme**.

Worm egg counting is recommended and now common practice for most horse owners instead of 'blanket worming' or worming periodically. It often results in financial benefits, as money is saved by not using wormers, as well as the long term benefits of not causing wormer resistance problems.



Wensum Valley Vets



Sweet Itch

What is Sweet Itch?

Sweet Itch (Culicoides Hypersensitivity) is a skin disease caused by an allergic reaction to midge bites. Affected horses react to both the bite and the midge saliva in a local reaction causing hypersensitivity and itching, which can be worsened by scratching, rubbing and self-trauma trapping horses in the 'itch-scratch' cycle. Broken skin can ooze, bleed or even become infected. This is a seasonal problem, starting in Spring and usually ending in the Autumn and is worse in hot/humid weather and at dawn and dusk, when midges are most active.

What are the signs?

- Mild to severe itching and rubbing, usually focussed on the mane, crest/back and tail head
- Loss/damage of tail and mane hair



Worming Scheme:

Our worming scheme offers fantastic value, for only £60 per year, you will receive:

- 4 worm egg counts
- 1 tapeworm saliva test
- 10% discount on any wormers required
- 1 faecal egg count reduction tests (FECRT)
- Unlimited worming advice

Please speak to your vet at their next visit or call our office on 01328 86444 if you are interested in joining.

- Bald patches, which may look grey due to skin damage or permanent hair loss
- Areas of reddened, sore or broken skin, which may bleed
- Constant itchiness and discomfort can cause behavioural/temperamental changes in some horses

Prevention

- Fly sheets or sweet itch specific rugs
- Regular application of insect repellants such as Deosect
- Stabling during times of high midge activity (dawn and dusk)
- Grazing on exposed fields with a good breeze (as midges are not strong fliers in any wind)
- Keep affected horses well away from standing water (ponds, lakes, marshes) and woodland where midges are more prevalent
- Regular cleaning of water troughs, which can act as breeding grounds for midges

- Use of insect-proof fine mesh on the windows and door of stables to keep midges out

Diagnosis

- Sweet itch can be diagnosed by the signs listed above

Treatment/medical management

Whilst sweet itch cannot be cured, it can be prevented and managed. Deosect, applied every 10 days, is a good midge deterrent and when used before the midge season begins can stop signs from developing. In more advanced cases a steroid injection can be used to lessen the signs and break the cycle of inflammation.

Management

- Regular application of insect repellants
- Stabling during times of high midge activity (dawn and dusk)
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