



WENSUM VALLEY VETS NEWSLETTER

Routine Care to consider in the New Year

Tapeworm

- If you haven't already submitted a tapeworm saliva test (Equisal) we recommend doing so before the middle of February.
- If you decide not to test for tapeworm, please give us a call so we can advise on an appropriate wormer to provide protection against them.

Redworm

As the weather gets colder, redworms in the gut start to burrow into the gut walls. Here, they can lie dormant until spring, when they emerge from the walls causing pain, inflammation and sometimes, blockages. To mitigate the risk of this we use a specifically targeted wormer once yearly between November and January. If your horse does not have worm egg counts, contact us so we can advise.

Worm Egg Count Scheme

Now is the perfect time to join our very popular Targeted Worming Scheme. This provides a minimum of 4 faecal worm egg counts per year and an Equisal tapeworm test, as well as

Preparing for Spring and reducing the risk of Laminitis

Many owners feel concerned about the risk of laminitis as Spring approaches, therefore the start of the New Year is the perfect time to review the ways you can reduce the risk of laminitis in your horse.

It is now understood that the main cause of laminitis in horses is endocrine disease. The two main types of endocrine disease as Equine Cushing's disease (PPID) and Equine Metabolic Syndrome (EMS). Previously we had no direct treatment for EMS and instead could only approach it from management changes, however new, game changing medications have been developed in this area.

Endocrine Testing

Establishing the risk factors for laminitis is essential in reducing its occurrence or recurrence and can provide significant help in its treatment. To test for Equine Cushing's a simple blood test is done, the laboratory fees for this test are often paid for by the organisation "**Care about Cushing's**". To test for EMS an 'Oral sugar test' is conducted, where syrup is fed 60-90 minutes before taking blood. These can both be easily arranged and carried out on your yard, although the EMS test must be booked in advance.



Endocrine Treatment

Equine Cushing's Disease is not curable but can be well controlled with Prascend (pergolide) tablets, significantly reducing the risk of Laminitis. Annual blood tests should be taken to monitor hormone



10% off wormers and unlimited worming advice and discussion, **saving you at least £25 per year.** Please call our office if you would like to sign up or know more.

By regularly conducting worm egg counts, you help to keep your horse's worms managed and protect worming products against resistance for future generations of horses.

Equine Dentistry

Routine dental care is essential to a happy and healthy horse, we recommend having a routine dental appointment every 6 months for most horses. Sharp or imbalanced teeth can interfere with eating and exercise, causing welfare issues. As prey animals, horses are excellent at hiding pain, particularly dental pain, so without regular check ups dental disease can go unnoticed. Reasons to book a dental examination include:

- Ridden issues
- Problems eating
- Dropping food (quidding)
- Finding chewed pieces of food
- Nasal discharge
- Swelling on head/face

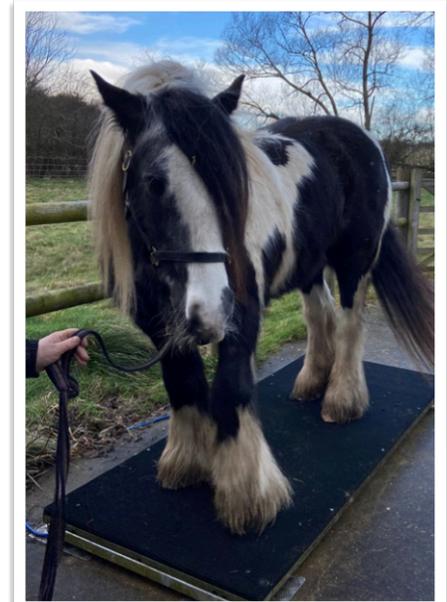


levels and ensure the treatment dose is correct. Due to it being a degenerative disease, sometimes the dose needs to increase as your horse or pony ages. Left untreated, Cushing's can significantly decrease quality of life and increase risk of infections, as well as causing laminitis.

Diet and exercise are the two best ways to treat EMS in horses. However sometimes adequate control of insulin levels and weight loss cannot be achieved by these alone, and medical help is needed. Some **recent advances in drug therapy** mean we have more medications that can be used to control insulin levels and reduce risk of laminitis. A short course of these can also **aid in weight loss**, as well as providing benefits in pain relief. These are usually only used after diagnosis of EMS, and can be useful for a short course such as one month, but can also be used longer term to keep insulin levels under control where needed. If EMS is present at this time of year, and insulin levels are out of control, treating this medically before Spring will reduce the risk of laminitis later in the year.

Weight Management

Regional fat deposits are a common sign of EMS, such as fat pads on the shoulder/neck/rump or a 'cresty neck', this fat is thought to be more metabolically active and interfere with the normal insulin process contributing to EMS. Therefore maintaining a normal Body Condition Score (BCS) is essential to reducing laminitis risk. This was covered in more detail in our July 2023 Newsletter. Our weigh scales at the clinic are free to use, so please call the office to arrange a time for your horse to weigh in if you would like to!



Foot Balance

Poor foot balance can contribute to the abnormal forces on the pedal bone (within the hoof) during laminitis and hoof issues, such as abscesses and abnormal growth, are common in horses that have previously suffered from laminitis. Boney changes to the pedal bone can be assessed by radiographing (X-raying) the foot, which is commonly carried out during laminitis, but also useful in horses that have previously suffered from it. The radiographs can be shared with the farrier to aid in their work.

