

Although it was the coldest and wettest start to spring most of us can probably remember, our thoughts now turn to summer and all the joy it brings. However, the summer months can also present their own problems for some horses and it is important to be prepared.

Sweet itch is a hypersensitivity to the saliva of midges. Most of the preventative measures (fly repellents, Boett rugs etc) available to us for sweet itch are concerned with trying to stop the midge saliva from coming into contact with the horse. Treatments aim to dampen down the immune response once the horse has been bitten (i.e anti-histamines and steroids).

We usually recommend a multi-modal approach:

- Reducing the attractiveness of the horse or pony to the midge (repellents) or reducing access of the midge to the horse or pony (rugs & stabling at dawn and dusk).
- Avoid grazing susceptible horses in summer months in habitats that support large numbers of midges (i.e close to standing water, forested areas and grazing protected from a breeze).
- To 'fire-fight' the immune response when a horse has a flare-up (anti-histamines as well as steroids).

Managing sweet itch over the summer period is challenging, especially in very susceptible horses that still suffer despite efforts by horse owners to control this distressing condition.

We now have access to a new product which may be of further benefit to some horses in the fight against this distressing and frustrating condition. Unfortunately, this treatment needs to be carried out before the midge biting season starts, so time is running out.

## Atypical Myopathy or Sycamore Poisoning

Please be aware that this disease can strike in the spring and early summer, when the sycamore seedlings are germinating. Horses will not voluntarily seek these seedlings out, but are known to be at increased risk of eating them if grazing is limited, there is a lack of supplementary hay/haylage, horses are turned out for more than 6 hours or if they are lower in the herd pecking order.



Affected horses can show very non-specific signs. Horses often

- appear weak and lethargic
- have high heart and breathing rates
- are reluctant to walk
- pass red/brown urine
- sweat heavily
- hold their heads low
- lay down quietly

Some may show colic signs, others are unfortunately found dead.

If you suspect your horse may have Atypical Myopathy contact us immediately. This is a true emergency.

## Teeth rasping

Routine dental examinations and rasping are an essential part of your horse's wellbeing and welfare. Additionally, dental disease can have a significant impact on a horse's performance. Dental pain can cause weight loss, slow eating, poor performance, choke or colic. Having a well balanced mouth helps maintain efficient chewing and a comfortable temporo-mandibular joint (important for contact acceptance). We recommend that all horses have their teeth checked at least once a year. Some horses benefit from more regular dental checks or rasping, especially performance horses and those with dental abnormalities. Why not get your horse's teeth checked and rasped at the same time as its yearly vaccination?

Our vets have a wealth of experience in all aspects of routine and remedial equine dentistry. We can perform dental procedures under sedation for nervous patients if needed, but also administer local anaesthetics, additional painkillers and antibiotics if required. This allows us to provide a calm and quiet experience whilst delivering the high quality of dental care that you should expect.



## Orthopaedics

As we turn to the upcoming competition season, it is important to take this time to consider pre-season health checks and lameness evaluations. It is worth noting that should a four-legged competitor require a helping hand with their movement, there are drug withdrawal times before competition to consider. Some long acting treatments require a 6 week withdrawal period.

While not all medications or treatments require a withdrawal period, most therapies require a period of rest and light work. This allows these therapies time to exert their anti-inflammatory effects and minimises the risk of 'joint flare', a possible side effect of intra-articular medication. Taking into consideration time off, a period of light work and withdrawal times, working backwards, if a horse is to be ready for competing in mid May, some long-acting medications need to be administered at the start of April to comply with competition clean sport rules.



## Supplements

Most performance and top showing horses are fed supplements all winter so that they are ready to go once the season begins. Unfortunately, all supplements are not created equal and with so many different joint supplements on the market, choosing a suitable supplement for your horse can be a bit of a mine field. While there is little evidence behind most supplements available on the market, two supplements we have had particularly positive feedback on are Hestevard Duraflex Elite and Hestevard Biotex 80.



Duraflex Elite is a veterinary strength mobility feed supplement which combines the nutritional benefits of Glucosamine HCl 99% pure, Chondroitin Sulphate, Boswellia serrata and bioavailable sulphur providing the components necessary for the nutritional maintenance of healthy cartilage.

Biotex 80 provides all the nutrients necessary to protect and nourish every layer of the hoof horn, to optimise growth and improve integrity of the hoof capsule. Hestevard are so confident of its efficacy that they offer a refund on the cost of the supplement if an improvement in hoof quality is not noticed after 6 months of use!

### Joint Supplement - discount price for April

**For the whole month of April we are offering a 10 % discount on 1KG tubs of Duraflex Elite and 3kg tubs of Biotex 80. Stocks at discounted prices are limited. Please phone the office to order your supplement today to avoid disappointment.**

## ACUPUNCTURE

As part of the comprehensive veterinary service we offer at Equivet we have a Certified Veterinary Acupuncturist (Dr Brian Sherry) as part of our team. There are a variety of treatment options under the acupuncture umbrella which include dry needle acupuncture, aqua-puncture, pneumo-acupuncture and electro-acupuncture. We always aim for maximal results from as few treatments as possible, so often use a combination of these options alongside typical veterinary treatments. Numerous conditions may benefit from veterinary acupuncture, for example; musculoskeletal, neurological conditions, emotional and dermatological disorders just to name a few.



If you would like to discuss any of these topics please contact us. Our office is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5 pm on 01483 811088. Outside of these hours this number will divert directly to our emergency vet on duty. Please save this number to your phone now so you have instant access to a vet in an emergency 24/7.

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