

EQUINE NEWSLETTER

Pastern Dermatitis (‘mud fever’)

As we move into autumn and winter, wet weather will likely see an increase in mud fever – a common complaint, and the term encompasses a range of skin reactions affecting the pasterns and lower limbs of horses.

There are a variety of remedies available to treat mud fever. Indeed, no single cure is effective against all cases, where various different irritants can be involved in the disease process.

Bacteria are not involved in all cases of pastern dermatitis, so antibiotics may not be indicated and are unlikely to produce a permanent cure.

Feathered horses with pastern dermatitis may also be suffering from infestations with mites. Typically these horses will stomp and itch their legs. Removal of straw bedding (which can harbour mites) and clipping the feathers will be beneficial in these cases.

In rare cases, horses and ponies may present with recurrent mud fever that does not go away, or is present during unusual times of year. These cases can be caused by an auto-immune condition called ‘leukocytoclastic vasculitis’, where the body attacks the skin. Typically, horses with white legs are affected and these cases are often worse during the summer, where exposure to UV light may aggravate the condition.

General tips include:

- **Allowing mud to dry and brushing off**
- **Avoid excessive washing with detergents or disinfectants – these can irritate the skin further**
- **Avoid exercising in sand schools with wet legs – sand can aggravate the skin and allow bacteria and fungi to penetrate**
- **The use of clean towels or drying leg wraps can help wick away excessive moisture from the skin**
- **Be careful with barrier creams – oily products can actually trap a layer of moisture against the skin, providing a perfect environment for bacteria to grow**

Equine Influenza Update

After an increase in equine influenza outbreaks throughout June and July, we are pleased to report that cases of equine ‘flu have been steadily declining throughout August.

Despite this, we encourage continued vigilance into the Autumn months for those of you travelling to equestrian events (including hunting and fun rides) to ensure vaccinations are up-to-date and that you practice good biosecurity when out and about.

Keep Britain’s Horses Healthy - Yard Excellence Scheme



We would like to encourage all yard owners or managers to join us on the evening of Tuesday 12th November to discuss Keep Britain’s Horses Healthy Yard Excellence Scheme, in collaboration with MSD and endorsed by the British Equine Veterinary

Association and World Horse Welfare.

Our equine vets will talk you through formulating a yard health plan, covering topics such as vaccination, weight management, worming and biosecurity. The aim is to give yard owners the opportunity to put protocols in place across a range of preventative health areas.

Along with a health scheme pack, attendees will receive a certificate of excellence for their yard after completion the health plan.

Places are limited, so please contact reception to book your place.

Belmont Farm and Equine Vets are pleased to announce...

Our Ledbury Office is now open!

Newmarket House, Market Street, Ledbury, HR8 2AQ

MONDAY - FRIDAY: 8:30am - 5:30pm

closed 12:30 - 1:30pm daily, phone lines remain open

Closed Saturday and Sunday

Tel: 01531 806129

• 24/7 FOR EMERGENCIES •

Using rugs in the winter

With winter approaching and the media reporting we should expect another 'Beast from the East' our horses may need some extra assistance in keeping warm this winter. However, there is often a tendency for us to over-rug our horses.

We humans will feel comfortable in a temperature range of 21-30 degrees Celsius and outside of this is when we start to feel hot or cold. For horses this range is 5-25 degrees Celsius so when we are feeling the cold our horses will often be perfectly comfortable. Their digestive process will generate heat to keep them warm (*therefore 24-hour access to forage is important in colder weather*).

Guidance for using rugs depends on whether the horse is clipped, stabled or turned out and of course breed and age. In the wild many horses/ponies would lose condition through the winter as they use fat reserves to keep warm, however we commonly see horses/ponies overweight in the spring and therefore at increased risk of laminitis. The table below is a useful guide to what rug to use in what temperature.

	Turned Out		Stabled	
	Clipped	Not Clipped	Clipped	Not Clipped
15°C and above	None	None	None	None
10 to 15°C	None	None	Light weight	None
5 to 10°C	Light weight	None	Medium weight	Light weight
0 to 4°C	Medium weight	Light weight	Heavy weight	Medium weight
-10 to 0°C	Heavy weight	Medium weight	Heavy weight	Medium weight
-10°C and below	Heavy weight	Heavy weight	Heavy weight	Heavy weight

Autumn Worming

Many of you will be aware of the importance of targeted worming programmes to protect horses from the threat of anthelmintic (wormer) resistance, by avoiding unnecessary dosing and using the correct product at the correct time.

A number of clients signed up to our Intelligent Worming Package this year, and we will be re-launching this in 2020. We recommend that all horses on the same turnout are part of the package for maximum benefit.

In the late autumn, we advise you treat your horses for encysted redworm larvae. These problematic parasites cannot be detected in a faecal egg count, but hibernate in the gut wall over winter. The mass emergence of these larval stages once temperatures rise again in the spring can cause significant damage to the gut wall, potentially resulting in weight loss, colic, or diarrhoea.

We have seen a large number of botfly eggs on horses' legs towards the end of the summer, and these should be treated for at this time, too.

A product containing moxidectin, such as Equest, should be used to target both botfly larvae and encysted redworm larvae. We advise giving this around November 5th (*another reason to 'remember, remember...'*).

This is also the time to treat your horse for any tapeworm your horse may have picked up during the summer months.

A saliva test is available, which will indicate whether your horse requires treatment for tapeworm. **The EquiSal tapeworm test kit can be purchased online (<http://equisal.co.uk/>) and is straightforward to use.**

Equest Pramox is a combination product which will also cover for tapeworm (the 'pramox' component provides the tapeworm cover).

If you have any queries about equine parasite control, or for more information about our Intelligent Worming Package, please feel free to contact us and speak to one of our vets.

Emergencies / Out of hours

In the unfortunate event that your animal requires veterinary attention out-of-hours, please dial the usual office number, where you will be given the telephone number of the on-duty vet.

It may be useful to keep a pen and paper handy to take this number down.

On the rare occasion that the duty vet is out of telephone reception, your call will be received by a helpful member of our answering team, who will ensure someone attends the emergency as soon as possible.

The answering team at Kernow can be contacted directly on 01432 381 440, if for any reason you cannot get hold of the duty vet.

HEREFORD: 01432 351471 • BROMYARD: 01885 488440 • LEDBURY: 01531 806129 •  @belmontfarmvets

Clinical Vets: Dominic Alexander • Will Allman • Mike Bellamy • Andrew Cooke • Nick Gibbon • Hannah Mitchell • Alex O'Malley
Matthew Pugh • Caroline Rank • Amelia Stevens • Harry Walby • Charlotte Watkins

Support staff: Michelle Harris • Sybil Legge • Laura Langford • Alice Mainwaring • Ros O'Sullivan • Sophie Powell • Emma Savage • Andrea Smith
Pam Strange • Harriet Turner • Millie Whitlock