

Equine News: August 2021

Heat Stress

If your horse or pony is competing where they are taking strenuous exercise in the high temperatures heat stress is a real risk so ensure you know the facts.

What is heat stress in horses?

It is a condition affecting some horses after strenuous exercise and usually, but not always, in warmer ambient temperatures.

Why do horses suffer from heat stress?

During exercise, the muscles of the horse work extremely hard and this generates huge amounts of heat. The horse is unable to lose enough heat quickly enough and the horse overheats. There may be a genetic susceptibility too as some horses appear more prone to developing the condition.

How can I tell if my horse has the condition?

Immediately after strenuous exercise, the horse will appear very distressed: head tossing, kicking out with fore or back legs, and being generally more difficult to handle than normal. Left untreated, the horse may become recumbent (lie down) and could become very seriously ill. Thankfully, knowledge and awareness of this condition is growing all the time and early recognition and prompt intervention can prevent a horse from progressing to serious illness.

How do I treat the condition?

Copious amounts (50 - 100 litres) of cold water soaking of the horse's body and muscles. Pouring cold water on hot muscles will not cause muscle cramps or colic. It is important to cool the horse as quickly as possible to prevent irreversible damage. This soaking is continued until the horse shows visible signs of improvement.

Can my horse get heat stress whilst grazing?

No. Heat stress only affects horses after strenuous exercise. Grazing horses can still suffer from sunburn and photosensitisation, but not heat stress.

Sun exposure

Remember to protect your horse from the sun. Horses with pink skin on their faces are very susceptible to sunburn and repeated sun exposure can increase the risk of tumours developing.

Fly masks are really effective at reducing the sun exposure to the eyes and eyelids where sun block cannot safely be applied.



Tick Trouble

The recent hot weather seems to have been favourable to ticks in this area. Ticks can cause local reactions at the site of a bite leading to scabs and lumps, usually around the muzzle or the bottom of the legs. More worryingly, ticks can transfer blood-borne diseases when they bite.



Borreliosis or 'Lyme disease' is the most common tick-borne disease but signs may not be obvious. Affected horses may have a mild increase in temperature, depression, stiffness, shifting lameness, eye pain and cloudiness, oedema around the joints, neurological signs or changes in behaviour. Blood tests taken two weeks apart can assist diagnosis.

Anaplasmosis or 'pasture fever' usually presents with signs of fever, inappetence, lethargy and swollen joints. Diagnosis is made by detection of infected white blood cells on a blood smear.

Babesiosis (Piroplasmosis) is less common in the North East as the weather generally isn't warm enough. Affected horses become lethargic or weak due to anaemia. The parasite can be seen inside red blood cells on a blood smear.

Prevention of tick bites is the best approach: avoiding grazing pasture with long grass between spring and autumn, especially near woods. Insecticidal treatment of horses will repel ticks but there are no licensed products. We can advise you on appropriate treatment. Diligent removal of ticks is also important and a small plastic tool can be purchased to make this easy. If treatment of tick-borne disease is required, an antibiotic *doxycycline* can be used in all three cases. These diseases are rarely fatal but sometimes require prolonged treatment.

British Dressage - North & East Region

Congratulations to Barbie & Joe for their recent success at the Petplan Equine Area Festivals at Alnwick Ford Equestrian earlier in July. They won the Advanced Medium Freestyle Bronze section. This means they have now qualified for the finals in October.

A huge well done to Barbie & Joe..... we wish you well in October.



What's in a name?

The equine team have been delighted by the Olympic success for Team GB and quite a few of us are in love with Charlotte Dujardin's Rio.



We love the fact he is called 'Pumpkin' —chosen because he arrived close to Halloween, was short and round in stature and orange in colour!

Let us know how your horse got their name!

Email on

equine@smvc.co.uk
or via our facebook page.



Don't forget about the ways you can reduce costs:

- 5% discount for payment on the day for your veterinary treatment and all medicines.
- Sign up for direct debit and get 2.5% discount on all sales.
- Reduced price zone visits are available for all areas at least once a month for routine appointments
- If you have more than 4 horses to be seen at the same yard you can have your own zone visit on a day and time of your choosing (£20 for one owner or £10 per owner if more than one).
- Monthly dental clinics at the surgery offer a significant saving on the cost of routine dentals (a saving of £25.49 on the usual price of a routine dental).

Zone Visits August and September

Zone 1 (NE44, NE46-47, NE49 & DH8) - Mon 2nd Aug, Mon 6th Sept

Zone 2 (NE19, NE45 & NE48) - Mon 9th Aug, Mon 13th Sept

Zone 3 (NE1-7, NE12-15, NE18, NE20, NE22-30 & NE61) - Sally -Thurs 4th Aug, Thurs 2nd Sept
Liz/Steph Mon 16th Aug, Mon 20th Sept

Zone 4 (NE8-11, NE16-17, NE21, NE31-43) - Mon 23rd Aug, Mon 27th Sept

Zone 5 (DH2-7, DH9 & DL13-16) - Tues 24th Aug, Tues 28th Sept

Zone visits offer a reduced price visit of £20 for one owner and £10 for more than one owner at same yard for planned routine veterinary work.

We are able to offer this service by mapping the most efficient route around the calls – therefore it is not possible to specify a time or vet for a zone visit.