



WINTER

Newsletter 2022



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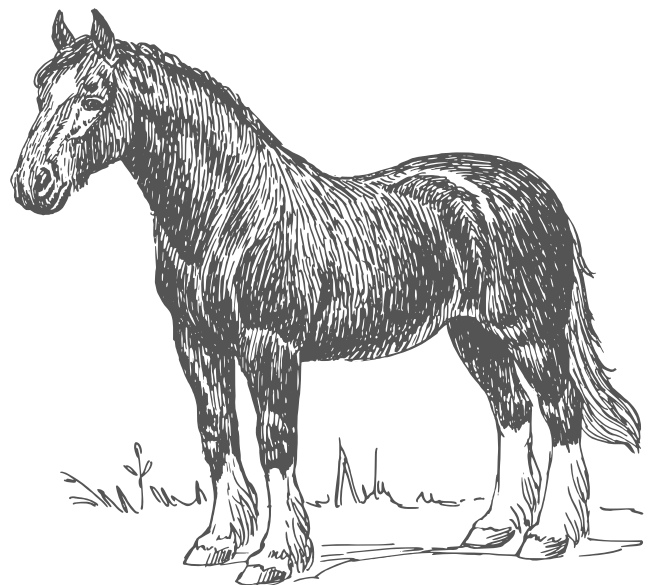
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OUR QUARTERLY UPDATE

New Life for EVN

Many of the clients who visited the clinic will have met Izzy, one of our long-suffering nurses. Izzy is a compassionate soul who works hard to make sure every patient gets the best of home comforts and cuddles while they are with us. Despite her calm composure and caring nature there lurks an adventurous spirit with the courage of a lioness. She has hiked up the Himalayas, served on the local mountain rescue team for years and doesn't blink at the prospect of taking charge of 20 teenagers on a campsite! We have become quite accustomed to 'What Izzy Did Next' on a Monday morning. However, she shocked us all one morning in Spring when she announced that she was to leave us and the job she just adores, for a new life on the Isle of Lewis, in the Outer Hebrides.

After several months of planning the loveable Izzy and her husband have packed up and moved everything lock, stock and barrel (or in Izzy's case horse, dogs and rare breed sheep!) to a caravan on the site of a tumble-down crofter's cottage just in time for the winter! They will rebuild the Croft as their new home over the next couple of years.

We say Goodbye to Izzy and wish her the best of times in her new life as a Crofter.

Post Script - we have just learned that Izzy has passed her fitness test for the local volunteer fire service and has lived through the first storm of the season.



Izzy digging a hole at the Croft



Izzy at the Croft with one of her rare breed sheep

Talent Scout

Jonathan appears to have developed a new skill as a talent scout. He needs a shout out for making two very welcome recommendations to our nursing team.

Nursing Assistant placements are in short supply and there is hot competition for the positions that come up. An Equine Veterinary Nurse assistant needs an to be able to handle all manner of horses well and we often find our successful candidates come from the yards and stables we visit. Our two newest student recruits were spotted by Jonathan while he was out on his rounds.

Introducing Maddie Bailey and Becci Taberham, both talent spotted by Jonathan and hopefully both keen to get started with the nursing certificate.

Maddie studied at Houghall College and couldn't believe her dream job came looking for her while she was working as an apprentice groom. Maddie has always been 'into' horses and particularly loved dressage, competing at the Equest National Championships last year. Her faithful steed Bailey (I know Bailey Bailey?) has now retired from competition but she claims she doesn't mind taking it easy these days. She is nearly 20 after all!

Following NVQ's at Kirkley college Becci entered the racing industry as a rider groom and from there worked on a local yard when Jonathan asked her to help him out with a foot abscess. It didn't take him long to recognise her potential as a good nursing assistant and it took less time for Becci to consider the opportunity to join the ranks of the nursing team. She is picking up the ropes quickly.

We are very glad to have them both on the team. They both work in the clinic but will travel out to assist vets on yards when they are needed. Say hi next time they arrive on your yard.



Becci



Maddie

OUR QUARTERLY UPDATE

Rare as Hen's Teeth

It's been six months since our Ross, exchanged his hoof testers for cat gauntlets when he left equine practice for the comfort of the small animal consult room.

It is never easy to lose a team member to the other side, but the equine industry is hard, with its long hours, persistent stress and inherent danger. As we have had a very stable work force for years, we didn't fully appreciate how difficult recruiting a new vet would be. The reality is that equine vets are as rare as hen's teeth. Of all the graduates coming through the system less than 10% make it to equine general practice. The pandemic and Brexit have added significantly to the shortage.

Our four remaining vets have pulled together admirably over the summer, but it's been tough, and we are grateful for their efforts. Fortunately, we have a couple of irons in the fire which we are hopeful will bring fresh blood to the practice in the coming months. In the meantime, we have Rosie Mould helping us out over the winter. Rosie is a familiar face in our region and is a very experienced vet who we love having on the team. Shame we can't tempt her to join us full-time but she is having too much fun with her carriage horses.



Rosie makes a splash



Tapeworm



Encysted Cyathostomins
(red worms)

Worms on the Move

The vet team has been seeing an increased number of horses presenting with a dull demeanour, inappetence and a slight fever. After putting their heads together, they agree there appears to be a correlation between the increase of cases seen and the unseasonably warm autumn weather. Coming in waves, this seems to be more prevalent when a warm spell follows a cold snap.

The encysted parasites mooching around inside the horses' guts are responding to the climate change and with increased activity are causing localised peritonitis.

Cases are responding well to anti-inflammatories, probiotics and/or antibiotic treatment without any significant complications, but it is well worth remembering that despite appropriate worming alongside quarterly worm egg counts there are always going to be parasites dwelling within the digestive tract which can cause disruption at migration.

Contact the vet if you notice a change in appetite, diarrhoea and/or general dullness.

OUR QUARTERLY UPDATE

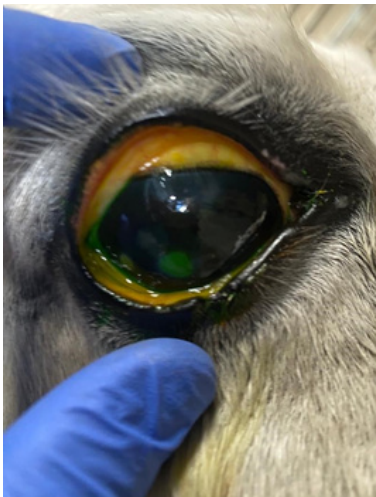
Out Foxing Bobby

Bobby is a slightly naughty opinionated 30 something furry fluff ball pony. He had a trauma to his right eye 2 years ago which likely was a penetration of the eyeball. This injury self-sealed with a scar tissue bridge from the iris to the cornea. It stayed inactive during that time but has now resurfaced as an area of ulceration of the cornea. He showed tearing, half closed eye and general reluctance for people to administer any medication.

Examination with magnification, ophthalmoscope, indicated a few problems including cataracts, damaged pupil, and damage to the retina.

Anti-inflammatories and eye medication solved the problem for a short period of time, but it came back again. He is now a circus pony when any attempt is made to administer drops to his eye. Today we placed a tube that opens in the recess above the eye under the lid. This allows his carers to administer the drops through the tube extending to his withers. He can now have drops 4 times a day, without any drama! The ulcer has also been debrided or cleaned with a cotton bud to remove all the damaged tissue.

We are hopeful that this helps the cornea heal and allows Bobby to go back to normal. The alternative is enucleation, which is a viable option, but for now we try to save his eye if we can.



Bobby's eye with ulcer



Bobby's eye with ulcer



Bobby lavage kit threaded into his fetlock



Bobby with his lavage kit fitted



INTERESTED IN BREEDING FROM YOUR MARE IN 2023?

If the answer is yes, it's time to start planning now!

Whether you are looking for potential stallions, thinking of natural covering, artificial insemination with chilled or frozen semen, or embryo transfer, our highly experienced teams of stud vets are happy to discuss any aspects of breeding with you.

We are a registered British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) approved practice for artificial insemination with fresh, chilled and frozen semen.

For more information about any of our reproduction services, please contact us.

We offer a range of breeding and foaling services, including:

- Artificial Insemination schemes (chilled and frozen)
- Embryo Transfer
- Neonatal foal care
- Infertility investigations
- Semen storage
- Pre-breeding swabs
- Support during foaling if needed, including 24/7 emergency cover
- Post-foaling checks



Points to consider before breeding from your mare:

- Are you happy for your mare to go away to stud or would you prefer to keep her at home?
- What stallion would you like to use and what type of semen is available?
- Are there any periods over the breeding season when the stallion may not be available?
- Would you like the mare mated naturally or is artificial insemination more appropriate or practical?
- Would you like the mare to foal down at home? If so, are you prepared to do foaling checks throughout the nights? Or, would you prefer her to foal down at a dedicated stud or veterinary practice?
- Are you financially able to cover the stud fees and costs for any complications that may occur?

YOUR GUIDE TO WINTER FEEDING

As the temperature drops, many horses will need to have their nutrition revised to keep them healthy and well. Always take into account the horse's, age, weight, breed and workload.



The first and main ingredient in the horse's diet is forage. Most horse owners will answer very precisely how much hard feed they give, but very few owners know how much hay their horse receives let alone the exact amount they consume.

Common winter diet adjustments:

Decreasing the amount of concentrate to lose weight

Losing weight can be difficult but key to the treatment of serious health issues cases (laminitis, equine metabolic syndrome, obesity), and can start with the following:

- Reduce the energy content of the forage. This can be achieved by soaking the hay for 12 hours. It is important to note that this will reduce most of the nutrients except the fibre and therefore a balancer should then be used to keep the mineral and protein intake to an acceptable level.

- A horse needs to eat about 2% of their body weight in fibre per day. In managing obese horses, the decrease of intake should be progressive although in some extreme cases, under veterinary care, we will advise a more intensive regime. A gradual reduction, such as starting at 1.9% of their body weight for a week, then 1.8% the following week, etc... until reaching 1.5% of his body weight can be trialled.

Increasing the hay intake and quality to gain weight

Increasing the energy intake on thin horses or even sport horses can be done by choosing feeds rich in either proteins such as alfalfa (lucerne), or fat like vegetable oils associated with Vitamin E, or an intermediate like sugar beet. At very high intensity exercise (polo, racing, high level eventing), starch based products are necessary but otherwise they should be avoided as they can increase the risk of gastric ulceration.

Any case not responding to these dietary measures should be seen by a vet as there could be an underlying condition preventing them from achieving healthy body condition score.

Tips on winter feeding:

- Good quality hay/haylage should be fed at regular intervals when there is little grass to pick at in the paddock, or during prolonged periods in the stable
- For 'good doers' and to alleviate boredom in stabled horses, forage can be fed in small-hole haynets or double haynets to encourage them to eat more slowly
- Don't be tempted to increase their hard feed during winter as this could lead to obesity or conditions such as laminitis and colic
- For fussy eaters, there is a wide range of fibre feeds available that can be fed as an alternative to hay
- Feed a balancer to help maintain condition and provide the correct level of vitamins and mineral



WINTER RUGGING & GROOMING

Here are some tips on rugging and grooming your horse during the winter months:

Rugging

- Horses can use up to 80% of their energy keeping warm, so if they are clipped or prone to feeling the cold, ensure they are adequately rugged
- If the temperature rises, make sure your horse isn't wearing too many layers, as they can lose condition by sweating and may also catch a chill when they cool down if the sweat cannot wick away through non-breathable fabrics
- Remove outdoor and stable rugs at least once a day to ensure that they are fitting well, with no rubs to your horse's withers or other pressure points and to monitor your horse's weight and condition
- Outdoor rugs should also be checked for tears and to ensure that they are waterproof. Remove a rug that is wet through and replace it with a dry one as soon as possible

Grooming

- Use grooming time to check your horse for lumps and bumps or skin conditions, and assess their general health
- Increases blood flow to the skin's surface
- Removes mud and dust
- Prevents dead skin and hair building up which can cause skin problems
- If your horse isn't rugged and lives out, don't 'over groom' as this may strip the coat of the natural oils and reduce its waterproofing abilities; dry mud or dirt also provides an extra layer of warmth
- Regular shampooing is not recommended as this removes essential oils which are needed to maintain a healthy coat and skin



UNDERSTANDING SEDATION IN HORSES



In order for veterinary surgeons to safely perform a range of procedures, such as dentistry, stitching up wounds, and surgical and diagnostic procedures, it is often necessary to use sedation.

- ✓ Can only be administered intravenously by the clinical team under the direction of a veterinary surgeon
- ✓ Be aware horses can still kick and react, despite administering any type of sedation
- ✓ Have a safe area with good footing (e.g. rubber matting) for the horse while sedated
- ✓ A sedated horse may become slightly ataxic (wobbly) but this is rarely a problem and the effect is only short term

Sedation can be given orally, via a syringe in the mouth, intravenously, via an injection into the horse's vein, or injected into the muscle.

Orally:

Advantages:

You can administer yourself

Disadvantages:

Slow to work and not as powerful as injecting

Intravenous injection:

Advantages:

It works fast and offers the most successful sedation

Disadvantages:

Can only be administered intravenously by the clinical team under the direction of a veterinary surgeon

Injecting into the muscle:

Advantages:

More reliable than administering orally

Disadvantages:

You need a higher dose than you would give intravenously and can only be administered by a vet

The amount of drugs and degree of sedation varies between each horse.

What type of sedation will your horse need?

The type of sedation your horse requires will depend on the procedure. For example, dental checks and clipping will depend on your horse's behaviour and how they are likely to react to the procedure. The type of sedation can also depend on whether your vet needs to do further work after sedation. An example would be if the horse has had to be sedated for a nerve block, they will need to see your horse trot up again to see if the nerve block has worked. Therefore, a milder sedation will need to be administered to ensure the horse wakes up quicker in time for the trot up.

What to expect when your horse is sedated

You may see your horse react to the sedation in a number of ways. This depends on the level of sedation administered:

Light sedation:

The horse will appear calmer but will still be alert

Medium sedation:

The horse will be extremely calm and may look sleepy with their head slightly lowered and a 'droopy' lower lip. The horse may also appear to be slightly 'wobbly'.

Heavy sedation:

The horse will be very sleepy with their head lowered to the ground. Again, the horse may sway and will still remain standing.

How long does sedation last?

Depending on the dosage and amount administered, sedation will usually wear off after about an hour. However, some horses may be awake quicker, within half an hour. You will need to monitor your horse for around 1.5 – 2 hours after sedating. You will know when they have fully recovered as they will be back to their normal selves.

Where should they be kept to wake up from the sedation?

The safest place for the horse to recover from sedation is in a stable. Ensure there is no food left in the stable as a sedated horse eating can result in choke. If you do not have a stable, then a small pen may be suitable.

When can they eat again?

Your vet will advise you on when your horse can start to eat again after sedation. Once your horse is fully awake, you will need to monitor them and ensure they are passing normal droppings. Sedation can slow the gut down, which can result in an impaction.

When can the horse be safely ridden again?

This will depend on the amount and dosage of sedation administered and should be discussed with your vet. Usually, the horse can be ridden the next day/24 hours after sedation.

Are there any potential side effects?

- Sweating profusely – a common side effect and not usually a cause for concern
- Small possibility of an allergic reaction
- Collapse
- Impaction, if fed too early after sedation
- Choke, if fed too early after sedation

REMEMBER, A SEDATED HORSE CAN STILL BE UNPREDICTABLE!

