

Practice News

What's New in the Equine World?

Legislation in the UK comes into force on 1st October 2018 (with a two-year period of grace before penalties) to have every horse microchipped. As of 2009, all horses in the UK had to have a passport issued and a microchip implanted. Horses born before 2009 must have a microchip implanted and should already have a passport. There is no legislation currently like this in Guernsey, but if your horse is resident in the UK for more than 30 days, it must have a passport and a microchip. Please contact the practice if you would like a microchip implanted in your horse, it is a straightforward procedure. The legislation also states that the passport must stay with the horse at all times and the horse should be registered in the name of the owner.

What's New in Equine Research?

One eye can be as good as two. Researchers have investigated as to whether horses can cope following the removal of an eye on medical grounds. Three-quarters of horses that had an eye removed, returned to some form of athletic activity; great news when hard decisions are to be made.

A New Range of Equine Supplements

Time and again we are asked our opinion on supplements to assist diseases of the hooves, joints, stomach and intestines. Our new range of supplements are the result of extensive research and development with world-leading Professors, Vets and Horse Professionals collaborating to bring you the very best, cost-effective additive to your horse's feed. The ingredients are double tested to be used in the competition horse without fear of a banned substance being present. They carry a palatability guarantee, so there is no waste. If your horse will not eat them, just let us know. Remember you will receive a 10% discount on these products if you are on our Equine Health Plan; the plan that spreads your annual veterinary costs into monthly payments.

New X-Ray Equipment

You may recall that we made a significant investment into equine equipment earlier this year with the purchase of a gastroscope to investigate stomach ulcers and a bronchoscope for respiratory disease. Further to this, we have ordered a new, state of the art digital x-ray machine with the latest in technology producing incredible detail, processing x-rays within seconds at the stable yard. This will revolutionise the time taken to investigate lameness, back pain and dental disease.



We are excited to introduce our new veterinary surgeon, Mairi Bruce. Mairi qualified from Glasgow University this year and is very keen on the veterinary care of the horse. Being a keen traveller and having a genuine interest in all aspects of veterinary

medicine, she spent months abroad while at university. Home is Argyll, Scotland. Coming from the rural West coast, Mairi is used to the outdoor life and enjoys keeping active in her spare time, with a particular love for horse riding and cycling.

Sarah-Jane and veterinary nurse Demelza le Ber have spent a week at the world renowned *Rosssdales Equine Hospital and Diagnostic*

Centre in Newmarket. Thanks to specialist veterinary surgeon Tim Barnett *BVM&S MSc BSc DipECVS CertAVP DipEVDC MRCVS* and all staff at Rosssdales for a fantastic week sharing their knowledge to help us treat horses in Guernsey. Tim holds specialist qualifications in dentistry and surgery.





Top Six Tips on Veterinary Care for Autumn



1. Avoid turnout where helicopter seeds have fallen from sycamore trees if grazing is sparse.
2. August to November is the best season to do a blood test for PPID (Cushing's disease).
3. Think about sedation for clipping.
4. Avoid colic by slowly changing routine from grazing to feeding hay/haylage.
5. Consider feeding soaked hay (full immersion under water for 20 minutes) or steamed hay to reduce the risk of equine asthma.
6. Worm egg counts are unreliable between November and March so only worm in December if egg counts have been positive in 2018, you have seen bot eggs (see picture) or if a six monthly tapeworm dose is due.

Ragwort Poisoning

Ragwort is a tall common weed that first appears in the autumn and grows over two years, before finally flowering between May and October in the second year. The flowers are distinctive. Despite its innocuous appearance, ragwort is poisonous if ingested over time, causing liver failure and eventually death. The toxin is extremely stable, and so even dried plants that have been baled up in hay retain their toxicity. Fortunately, the plant has an unpleasant taste, so horses will not usually choose to eat fresh ragwort. If they are very hungry, however, they will give it a go – such as when out in a dry, bare field during a hot summer like the one we have just had.

Symptoms of ragwort poisoning

Signs of liver disease are insidious in onset and the very early stages of the disease are often missed. The liver slowly starts to lose function over time, and symptoms only develop when the organ is no longer able to compensate for the damage caused. Most cases present quite suddenly, although the horse may have been a little "off-colour" for a couple of weeks or so. The early symptoms are depression, loss of appetite, weight loss, diarrhoea and mild jaundice (yellowing of the mucous membranes). More severe symptoms include photosensitivity (pink skin becoming inflamed or blistered), confusion, stumbling, head pressing, blindness and collapse. The cruel thing about this kind of toxicity is that by the time symptoms have started to appear the condition has progressed so far that nothing can be done to treat it – symptomatic horses will usually die within 10 days. As such the only real treatment is euthanasia.

Prevention of ragwort poisoning

As a responsible horse owner, you must do everything you can to ensure that there is no ragwort available to your horse. You have a legal obligation: the Noxious Weeds (Guernsey) law, 1952, states that the occupier of land must not allow noxious weeds to grow on that land. Ragwort is specified in the legislation. The plant is very hardy, and during the first year is flat, resistant to mowing and easily missed. It is readily identified in the second year by the flowering head. Pasture should regularly be checked for plants, and any found should be dug up and removed, including the roots. There are specialist tools which are available for the purpose. The plants should be handled with caution, as they are also toxic to humans – including the pollen which can be inhaled. All removed plants should be burned. The plants can also be sprayed, although spraying should be done with caution on any pasture. Ragwort control is an ongoing process; the seeds are extremely durable and can survive in the soil for years before germinating. It is also worth inspecting adjoining land – if the next-door field has lots of plants, the seeds will inevitably drift over on the breeze. Also, be cautious about ragwort bundled up in hay – the plant loses its unpleasant taste when dried, so contaminated hay is the most common source.



NOVEMBER

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A Date for Your Diary

Save Tuesday 20th November for our equine evening, to be held at La Villette Hotel, St Martins - 7:00 pm for 7.30 pm prompt start. Topics to include laminitis, stomach ulcers and equine asthma. Tea, coffee and biscuits provided. Places are limited to 80 so please RSVP to vets@isabelle vets.co.uk

Tel: 01481 723863

Opening Hours: Route Isabelle - Mon - Friday 8.00 - 18.30 | Saturday 8.00 - 17.30 | Sunday by appointment
 Opening Hours: L'Islet - Mon - Friday 8.30 - 18.00 | Saturday 8.30 - 12.30 | Sunday by appointment
 Appointments & Emergencies 01481 723863 | vets@isabelle vets.co.uk

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