



STABLE CLOSE EQUINE PRACTICE
EQUINE VETERINARY CARE ACROSS HAMPSHIRE

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EQUINE NEWSLETTER



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Team update



Welcome back Malcolm

After a year at the helm of the **British Veterinary Association (BVA)**, we're delighted to welcome **Malcolm Morley** back to Stable Close Equine Practice.

Malcolm is now serving as the Senior Vice President of the BVA and rejoins our team for two days a week, while continuing to support and represent the veterinary profession nationally.

A warm welcome to Dani

In addition, we extend a warm welcome to Dani Georges, who has stepped in to assist us during Ellie's recovery from an injury.

Dani graduated from the University of Bristol, before working at an equine hospital in Northamptonshire.

Outside of work, Dani enjoys spending time by the sea with her beloved Golden Retrievers, Amber and Holly. When she's not walking her dogs, she enjoys taking on the challenge of a bouldering wall!

When asked what has been her most memorable case Dani remembered a bank holiday weekend treating a miniature horse with colic who had the tiniest foal at foot that gave Dani lots of cuddles.



A fond farewell to Susie

Sadly, we bid farewell to Susie Rees, who seamlessly fitted back into the practice again, having worked with us several times during the last few years.

Susie's invaluable expertise in equine dentistry has been a tremendous asset, especially during Ellie's recovery, and she will be sorely missed by all of us at Stable Close Equine Practice.

Foot balance xrays:

Use your time this winter to prepare your horse for a success filled year in 2024.



How much lameness could be prevented by clinical assessment of foot balance before an injury in the foot or limb occurs?!

We strongly believe that you can improve your horse's soundness and performance by your farrier optimally balancing, trimming and supporting your horse's feet. In order to do this to the best of his/her ability foot balance xrays are a must - to identify the position of the structures within the foot in relation to the external hoof capsule that he/she is working with.

We are currently offering foot balance xrays at a reduced fee, with further discount for multiple horses at the same yard.

We will take radiographs, liase with your farrier to provide the images and discuss your horse's case.

“No foot, no horse”

No truer word was spoken!

What to look for when buying a horse:

When buying a horse, there are several important factors to consider to ensure you make an informed and responsible decision.

Purchasing a horse is a significant commitment, both financially and in terms of care, so taking the time to thoroughly assess your options is essential.

Here are some key points to look for when buying a horse:

Purpose and goals:

Are you looking for a leisure riding horse or a competition horse? Your goals will help determine the breed, age, and training level that best suits your needs.

Experience and skill level:

Choose a horse with a temperament and training level that matches your abilities. A novice rider might require a well-trained, gentle horse, while an experienced rider could handle a horse with more energy and potential.

Breed and conformation:

Research different horse breeds and their characteristics. Consider the horse's conformation as it can affect soundness and performance.

Health and soundness:

A pre-purchase veterinary examination (PPE) is crucial to assess the horse's overall health, soundness and any potential medical issues.

Age:

Younger horses might require more training and have unpredictable development, while older horses could have more health concerns. Choose an age that suits your experience and goals.

Training and behaviour:

Evaluate the horse's training level and behaviour. A well-trained horse with good manners and a willing attitude will likely be easier to handle and work with, especially for less experienced riders.



History and background:

Obtain as much information as possible about the horse's history, including previous owners, training, medical records and any behavioural issues.

Legalities and documentation:

Ensure all necessary legal documentation, such as ownership transfer and health records, are properly handled. This helps prevent any future disputes and ensures a smooth transition of ownership.

Passport/Microchip:

Horses must not be sold on without a passport and microchip. It is a legal requirement that all horses, ponies and donkeys in the UK must have an equine passport and microchip - even if they are retired or do not ever leave their field.

Please contact the practice to discuss booking in a PPE.

Take your time, do thorough research, and don't hesitate to ask questions before making your final decision. The wellbeing and happiness of both you and the horse depends on making the right choice.

What's involved in a lameness exam?

History and observation:

The vet begins by gathering information about the horse's medical history, previous injuries, exercise routine and any recent changes in behaviour. They observe the horse's gait at rest, looking for any noticeable abnormalities, asymmetries, or signs of discomfort.

Palpation and manipulation:

The vet examines the horse's limbs, muscles, joints, and other relevant areas through palpation and manipulation. They look for signs of swelling, heat, pain, or sensitivity. By applying pressure and flexing or extending joints, they can assess the range of motion and identify any areas of discomfort.

Flexion tests:

Flexion tests involve applying controlled stress to specific joints by flexing them for a specified period. This helps to detect subtle lameness that may not be apparent during regular movement. The vet observes the horse's gait immediately after releasing the flexed joint to see if any lameness becomes more pronounced.

Walk and trot in hand and lungeing:

The horse is then evaluated in motion. The vet will ask the horse to walk and trot in a straight line on a hard surface, observing its movement from different angles. They look for irregularities in the gait, such as head-bobbing, short strides, dragging of the toes, or changes in the rhythm. In some cases, the horse may be lunged on a circle to further assess its gait and lameness under different conditions.

Diagnostic blocks:

If the source of lameness remains unclear, the vet may use diagnostic nerve or joint blocks. This involves injecting a local anaesthetic into specific nerves or joints to temporarily numb the area. By selectively blocking different areas, the vet can identify the exact location of the lameness. If the lameness improves after a specific block, it suggests that the blocked region is the source of the problem.

Imaging and diagnostics:

In certain cases, additional diagnostic tests may be necessary to obtain a more detailed evaluation. This can include radiographs (X-rays), ultrasound, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), or computed tomography (CT) scans. These tests help visualise the bones, joints, ligaments, and soft tissues, providing valuable insights into the nature and extent of the problem.

Diagnosis and treatment plan:

Based on the findings from the lameness examination, the vet makes a diagnosis and develops a tailored treatment plan. The plan may include medication, rest, physical therapy, corrective shoeing, joint injections, or surgery, depending on the underlying cause and severity of the lameness.



Why diagnostic imaging techniques are so valuable in a lameness examination



Diagnostic imaging techniques play a vital role in identifying the underlying causes of lameness, allowing vet to develop appropriate treatment plans.

Here are some commonly used diagnostic imaging techniques in equine lameness:

Radiography (X-rays)

Radiographs are the most widely used imaging technique in equine lameness diagnosis. They provide detailed images of the bones and joints, allowing vets to detect fractures, joint diseases (such as osteoarthritis) and bony abnormalities. X-rays are particularly effective for evaluating the limbs, foot balance and bony structures.

Ultrasonography

Ultrasonography utilises high-frequency sound waves to create real-time images of soft tissues, such as tendons, ligaments, and muscles. It is especially useful in evaluating injuries to these structures, including tears, strains, and inflammation. Ultrasonography can also aid in assessing joint capsules and identifying fluid accumulation or synovial pathologies.

Nuclear Scintigraphy

Nuclear scintigraphy, also known as a bone scan, involves injecting a small amount of

radioactive material into the horse's blood stream. The radioactive substance accumulates in areas of increased bone metabolism, highlighting regions of potential injury or disease. Scintigraphy is great for finding fractures or issues in the back/pelvis.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

MRI uses a powerful magnetic field and radio waves to generate detailed images of soft tissues, bones and joints. It provides excellent visualisation of structures like cartilage, tendons and ligaments. MRI is particularly valuable in diagnosing complex lameness cases, such as injuries to the hoof, or suspensory ligament.

Computed Tomography (CT)

CT scans produce cross-sectional images by combining multiple X-ray views. It can provide detailed information about fractures, bone tumours, or other conditions affecting the skeletal system.

What would happen if your horse was infected with equine influenza?

Equine influenza is a highly contagious respiratory disease that affects horses, and its consequences can range from mild to severe, depending on various factors such as the horse's overall health, and vaccination status.

It is essential to consult with a vet if you suspect your horse has equine influenza. A vet can provide a proper diagnosis, recommend appropriate treatment, and advise on biosecurity measures to prevent further spread.

If your horse is infected with equine influenza, several outcomes and considerations may arise:

Clinical symptoms:

Respiratory issues:

Equine influenza primarily affects the respiratory system. Infected horses may show symptoms such as coughing, nasal discharge, and an increased respiratory rate.

Fever:

Horses with equine influenza often develop a fever, which is one of the early signs of the infection.

Depression and weakness:

Infected horses may exhibit signs of lethargy, depression, and a decrease in appetite and energy levels.

Quarantine and isolation:

Infected horses should be isolated to prevent the spread of the virus to healthy individuals. Quarantine measures are essential to control the outbreak.

Treatment:

There is no specific cure for equine influenza and treatment is generally supportive. This includes rest, proper nutrition and sometimes anti-inflammatory medications to manage symptoms.

Vaccination:

Vaccination is a crucial aspect of preventing equine influenza. Horses that are regularly vaccinated are less likely to contract the virus, and if they do, the severity of the illness is often reduced.

Recovery period:

Horses infected with equine influenza typically require a period of rest and recovery. The duration of recovery depends on the severity of the symptoms and the overall health of the horse.

Impact on performance:

Equine influenza can have a significant impact on performance. Even after apparent recovery, the horse may experience a temporary decrease in athletic ability.

Long-term effects:

In some cases, equine influenza can have lingering effects on a horse's respiratory health. Chronic respiratory issues may persist, impacting the horse's long-term wellbeing.

Overall, prompt identification, isolation, and appropriate veterinary care are essential for managing equine influenza and preventing its spread within the equine population. Regular vaccination and biosecurity practices play a crucial role in minimising the risk of infection.

If you need to book your horse in for a vaccination or need more information, please call the practice.

Do you know your horse's vital signs?

T.P.R - Temperature, Pulse, Respiration:
You will need a thermometer and watch to check your horse's TPR.

The normal temperature of a horse should be 37.5-38.5°C

A normal heart rate for a horse is around 32-40 beats per minute

A horse's respiratory rate should be approximately 12 breaths per minute

If you don't have access to a stethoscope and can't feel a pulse under the jaw, try putting your hand flat on the skin immediately behind the point of the elbow- left side of the horse is better than the right for this.

Mucous Membranes - A horse's gums should be a healthy pink salmon colour and moist to touch.

How to care for your horse's legs

in mud, ice and snow



Caring for your horse's legs in challenging weather conditions like mud, snow and ice is crucial to ensure their wellbeing and prevent injuries and skin issues like mud fever.

Here is a guide to help you care for your horse's legs during these conditions:

Regular inspection:

Inspect your horse's legs daily, paying close attention to the hooves, pasterns, and fetlocks. Look for any signs of swelling, cuts or abrasions.

Cleanliness:

Mud, snow and ice can accumulate on the horse's legs, leading to skin issues or discomfort. Wash or let dry and brush off and remove any debris from the hooves.

Hoof care:

Regular hoof maintenance is crucial, especially in snowy and icy conditions. Clean the hooves daily, picking out any packed snow or ice. Ensure that the hooves are properly trimmed and balanced by your registered farrier to provide better traction.

Use of leg protection:

Consider using leg protection, such as waterproof boots or wraps, to shield the lower legs from mud, snow and ice. These can help prevent injuries and keep the legs dry.

Application of barrier products:

Consider applying a protective barrier product on your horse's legs, especially in muddy conditions. Speak to your vet for further advice to make sure the product is safe for your horse's skin and doesn't cause irritation.

Bedding in the stable:

If your horse spends time in a stable, ensure that the bedding is clean and provides a dry environment. Dry bedding helps prevent the development of thrush and other hoof-related issues.