

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter.

2020 has been a challenging year for us all on different levels, but we are delighted to be back to a 'new normal' at Stable Close after a rather extraordinary spring and summer.

During the height of lockdown, we had a reduced office team and Tessa very adeptly organised and ran the office, ably assisted by Sue. Thankfully as work picked up, they were soon rejoined by Tanya and Jayne.

Malcolm and Alex adapted to a new way of working – keeping everyone safe whilst being there for you and all your horses when you needed us. A large number of you were fortunate enough to not need a visit during the lockdown period, but we kept in touch with many of you via our online webinars – thank you for your support.

Our vet team is now back to a full headcount.

We hope you have a fantastic autumn with your horse and manage to get some time to get out and about and enjoy this beautiful scenery.

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Welcome Ellie and James

We are delighted to have two dedicated equine vets join our team:

Ellie, and her spaniel Albus, join us from an equine practice on Jersey. Ellie may already be known to some of you who travel between competition bases on the mainland and the island.

James started with us earlier this year – joining us from an equine practice in Gloucestershire and is also accompanied by his spaniel Isla.



Farewell to Izzy

Izzy has sadly left us for an exciting new international career. We wish her all the best as she joins World Horse Welfare as a veterinary officer.

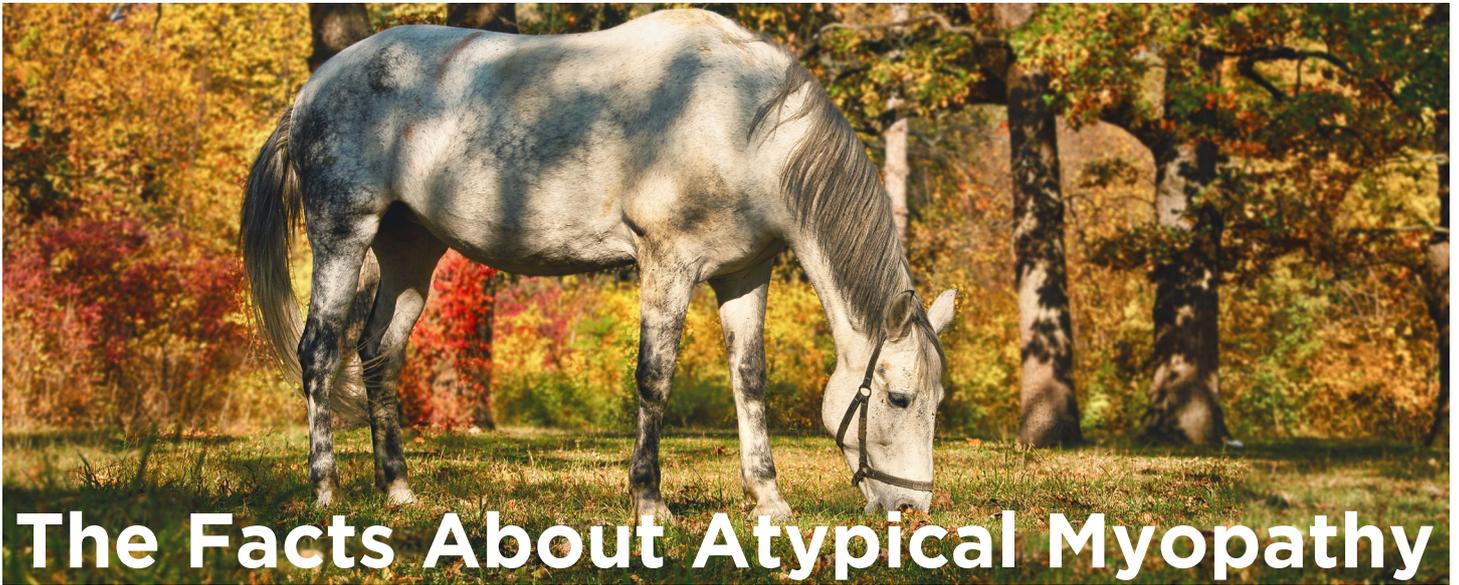
Congratulations Vicky Jux

Early in the year, Vicky went on maternity leave – she has given birth to two very tiny, but healthy little girls – and we look forward to her rejoining us next year.



Louise returns

We look forward to our part time member Louise returning soon to relieve the pressure and allow the vets to catch up with the backlog. Then the team will be complete.



The Facts About Atypical Myopathy

What is Atypical myopathy?

Atypical myopathy is a potentially fatal muscle disease in horses which mostly occurs in the autumn and spring, and is associated with horses eating sycamore seeds or seedlings.

Sycamore seeds and seedlings contain the toxin Hypoglycin A. When ingested, the toxin causes muscle damage and particularly affects the postural muscles (those that enable the horse to stand), the diaphragm (those muscles that facilitate breathing) and the heart muscle.

Could my horse be at risk?

Sycamore seeds appear in the autumn and are shaped like helicopters, which enable them to travel a long distance, especially in the wind.

Horses don't tend to find sycamore seeds very palatable but if your horse is grazing on poor quality pasture, they may be tempted to eat them.

Most cases will occur during the autumn when the seeds have dropped onto the pasture, or during spring due to sycamore seedlings which can also be high in Hypoglycin A.

Can I prevent the risk of Atypical myopathy?

- Check fields carefully for sycamore leaves and seeds
- Keep horses away from areas where seeds are falling
- Fencing off areas where sycamore seeds and leaves have fallen
- Hoover-up/pick up sycamore seeds off the pasture
- Turning horses out for shorter periods
- Provide extra forage (hay or haylage), especially where pasture is poor or grazing is tight
- Reducing stocking density so there is plenty of good grazing for every horse
- Seedlings must be removed, mowing or using weed killer does not remove the toxin from the pasture and horses will eat the dead seedlings unknowingly

When a case is seen or suspected, then field mates should be removed from the pasture and blood tested to see whether they too have muscle damage and could be developing the disease.

Provision of antioxidants, B vitamins and amino acid supplements may be worthwhile in these cases. Unfortunately outbreaks of disease are common but many horses with only changes on their blood work will not show any clinical signs and will do well.

Signs that your horse may have Atypical myopathy:

- Muscle soreness
- Stiffness
- Muscle tremors
- Weakness
- Lethargy
- Fast/laboured breathing
- Reluctance to work
- Red or brown urine
- Choke
- Whinnying
- Head tossing or low head carriage
- Fast or irregular heart beat
- Sudden death



If you suspect your horse has atypical myopathy then call your vet immediately as intensive care will often be required. Even with treatment survival is quite low but is improved with intensive care.

Advice on Redworm and Tapeworm

Faecal worm egg counts enable us to understand which of our horses are passing the most eggs onto our pastures and therefore which need worming and which do not.

Redworm



Small redworms are one of the most common and usually do not cause harm except in young horses with a significant burden of larvae (immature worms). The small redworm larvae will hibernate (encyst) within the intestinal wall during the late autumn and winter. While encysted they cannot be detected on faecal worm egg counts. When these larvae mature and emerge from the gut wall they can cause a large amount of damage to the intestine leading to weight loss, colic, diarrhoea and may be life-threatening.

Strategic worming is becoming an essential part of horse husbandry alongside excellent pasture care (collecting manure regularly and co-grazing with cattle and sheep).

It is important to use faecal worm egg counts to monitor worm burdens through the year although it should be noted again that this test does not pick up encysted red worm (because they are immature worms in the wall, rather than adults releasing eggs into the ingesta) or tapeworm. Therefore the majority of horses will require a minimum of an annual wormer to treat tapeworm. If a young horse, or on particular sorts of management, it might be appropriate to treat for small redworm too - please talk to your vet about this.

Tapeworm



Appropriate treatment for tapeworm is an essential part of a deworming program as a heavy burden can lead to multiple different forms of colic. Depending on advice from your veterinary surgeon, your pasture management, access to particularly wet land and previous treatments, a suitable protocol can be made. As a minimum it is recommended to use a product that will kill tapeworm once a year although if the risk assessment indicates a high risk group then twice yearly might be required. The time of year is not dramatically important as there does not appear to be a seasonal peak, but treatment timing should be based on advice from your veterinary surgeon.

There are a number of horse wormers available on the market, but not all are suitable to treat redworm and tapeworm. It is therefore important to make sure you choose the right worming methods and products for your horse's circumstances by discussing your worming programme with your vet.

Please don't hesitate to contact us on 01962 779111 for some advice about worming your horse and the best way to reduce the risk of resistance to the wormers.

Acorn Poisoning



Did you know that acorns may be poisonous to horses when ingested?

A study considered that the levels of tannins in oak may cause damage to the kidneys, liver and intestinal tract in the horse. Tannins are known to be poisonous in other species and they speculated that it was the same in horses.

Whilst some horses seem to tolerate eating a small number of acorns, others are thought to be more susceptible to acorn poisoning and can become very ill. In extreme cases it can even be fatal.

Clinical signs:

- Colic
- Diarrhoea
- Liver and/or kidney failure
- Dehydration

Prevention:

- Avoid your horse from grazing underneath or near oak trees, especially during the Autumn months
- Fence off oak trees in your paddocks
- Picking up and removing acorns from the floor
- Provide good forage/ grazing so your horse is not tempted to eat acorns



Horses and Fireworks

For horse owners, the impending firework season brings stress and worry, as horses can easily be spooked and frightened by the bright flashing lights and loud bangs as horses are flight animals. Preparing in advance will help to ensure their safety.

First of all, find out the details of local firework displays and alert the organisers that you have horses nearby. Speak to your neighbours and let them know you have horses next door.

Horses like routine, so it is really important to keep this consistent to help them to settle quickly and make them feel at ease. It is advisable to stable them if there is a display nearby, but if they are used to being out then they may settle more being turned out in their usual paddock. Be sure to check their paddock and fencing to make sure it is secure and there are no protruding nails or inappropriate fencing material.

Keeping your horse occupied during a firework display will help them to settle and stay calm. If they are turned out, scatter hay around the paddock to keep them busy. If they are stabled, a treat ball may help to take their mind off the lights and loud bangs. Try a plastic mirror on the wall in the stable - this can make the horse calmer and think they have company. If your horse is stabled, try playing music to mask the loud bangs.

Check your horse throughout the evening or stay with them to help keep them calm. Try and stay calm yourself - horses can pick up on our emotions. Make sure you also stay safe whilst being around your horse. Horses can be unpredictable when they are frightened.

If you know your horse gets anxious and stressed around fireworks, contact your vet as they may need some oral sedation during the firework display.

After the fireworks, check the field for used fireworks, as they could cause injury.

If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us for advice on keeping your horse calm.