



# STABLE CLOSE EQUINE PRACTICE

EQUINE VETERINARY CARE ACROSS HAMPSHIRE

## Castration Information Sheet

### Before the Operation

- Your horse should be fit and healthy. If you suspect he is ill or off colour, please let us know before the vet arrives as we may need to postpone the operation.
- The optimum time to castrate is the Spring.
- Colts should be halter trained and reasonably well handled.
- We advise all colts should be fully vaccinated against tetanus prior to the procedure – this involves 2 vaccinations given 4 weeks apart. Immunity then develops over the following 1-2 weeks – this would be an appropriate time to castrate. If this is not possible we suggest that the colt has had at least one primary tetanus vaccination and, although immunity would only be partial at the time of surgery, the second could be given at the time of the castration 4 weeks later.
- The colt will need to be clean underneath. If it is wet and muddy, you may need to keep him in the night before and brush off any dried mud from underneath his belly, thighs and tail.
- There should be a suitable area (clean, flat) in which to confine the horse for handling – this may be a pen in a field, but preferably a field shelter or stable should be available in case of difficult weather conditions. We will require two clean buckets of warm water, a tail bandage and a clean surface on which to rest instruments (eg. a bale of shavings or a clean towel).
- Please have the horse's passport present. If the declaration in section 2/9 has not been signed, we advise this should be done prior to the operation.

### The Operation

- Firstly, the vet will check the horse's heart and ensure that he is fit and well, check both testicles are present and everything is normal.
- Depending on several factors, the castration may be carried out either standing under heavy sedation or with the horse lying down under general anaesthetic.
- The horse will be given intravenous sedation, antibiotics and pain relief.
- The scrotum will be cleaned and local anaesthetic administered. Time is allowed for this to take effect then a final preparation of the operation site will be carried out.
- An incision is made through the skin of each side of the scrotum, the testicles are pulled down and the emasculators are applied to remove the testicles in turn. The emasculators are held in place for a short while. The incisions are left open and no sutures are usually used.

### After the Operation

- The colt should be kept in a contained area and observed for 6-8 hours to monitor recovery and the surgical site.
- After this time, you may resume normal management, including turn out but it is important that this includes two periods of 20 minutes brisk exercise either in hand or gentle lunging.
- It is quite normal for blood to drip from the wound for an hour or two immediately after the operation. Occasionally a clot of blood may fall out and bleeding may re-start for a while.
- No hay or feed should be given until the horse has fully woken up from the sedative. (Generally, about 90 minutes after the operation or longer if he seems very sleepy)
- Swelling of the area for 2-3 days is quite normal. This should go down and not return. **If swelling returns after 5-10 days this may be due to an infection and you should speak to your vet.**
- You may be given antibiotics at the vets discretion. Administer these and any other medication given, according to the vets instructions.
- There is no need to clean the wounds but they should be checked regularly and should heal within 2-3 weeks.
- Often, you may see a short length of swollen tissue protrude from the wound quite soon after the operation. **If this does occur please notify the vet.**
- **If your horse appears in-appetent, uncomfortable or you see any signs of colic after the operation please call the vet immediately.**