

STABLE CLOSE EQUINE PRACTICE
EQUINE VETERINARY CARE ACROSS HAMPSHIRE

Autumn / 2024

AUTUMN EQUINE NEWSLETTER

STABLE CLOSE TEAM UPDATE

It has been a busy year at Stable Close Equine Practice.

Malcolm has slotted seamlessly back into clinical work after his term as British Veterinary Association president and Vicky has risen to the challenges brought by combining clinical work with raising a young family and is enjoying being back!

We have sadly had to say goodbye to **Ellie**, who after sustaining a very serious injury to her knee, has made the decision to move across to small animal veterinary practice. We wish her lots of luck and good wishes, and will miss her at Stable Close.

We have welcomed on board two new vets to the practice: **Archie Moffat** and **Bridey Shawyer**.

Archie joined the team at Stable Close Equine Practice in August 2024 - he may be already known to many of you as he grew up in the local area and used to compete his Arab in Endurance rides. Archie graduated from Nottingham in July 2023 and started his career at an equine hospital in Devon for 6 months as an intern. He then worked at Charles Sturt University in Australia for 6 months in a mixed clinical and teaching role at the equine veterinary teaching hospital before returning to the UK. Archie enjoys all aspects of equine clinical work, and in his spare time runs and plays cricket and hockey for local sports teams.

Bridey joined Stable Close Equine in September 2024. After qualifying she spent time in ambulatory equine practice in Southern England before undertaking an Intern position at Liphook Equine Hospital. She has a passion for all aspects of equine veterinary care, with a particular interest in dentistry and reproduction. Outside of work, Bridey enjoys riding and helping her family with the breeding and showing of American Miniature Horses. She is often accompanied on her calls by her loyal Dachshund, Nula.



Archie Moffat



Bridey Shawyer

horsevet.co.uk | 01962 779111

Stable Close Equine Practice, Bridgets Farm, Bridgets Lane,
Martyr Worthy, Winchester, SO21 1AR

EQUIPMENT UPDATE

As a practice we believe in continually investing in and upgrading our diagnostic equipment to be able to continue to offer the best possible service to you and your equine friends at your own premises.

We recently upgraded our musculoskeletal ultrasonography equipment enabling enhanced detail and sensitivity of the images obtained. The prompt and early diagnosis of soft tissue lesions can not only prevent them from escalating further but can allow modern therapeutics to be used to improve the quality of healing and reduce the overall rehabilitation time required.



**Thursday 21st
November**

@ Arlebury Park,
Alresford, SO24 9EA

7pm arrival for 7.30pm start

**WINTER
EQUINE
CLIENT
EVENING**



We'll be discussing important topics like Degenerative Joint Disease (DJD/Arthritis) and providing the latest updates on worming.

To book your free place, please contact the practice on (01962) 779111 or office@horsevet.co.uk

DON'T MISS IT!

WHY YOUR HORSE NEEDS A PRE-WINTER HEALTH

As the crisp autumn air sets in and the leaves begin to change colour, it's crucial to think ahead for your horse's wellbeing. A pre-winter health check by your vet is more than just a precaution—it's a proactive step towards ensuring your horse remains healthy and resilient through the colder months. Here's why it's advised:

Weight management:

Winter poses challenges for maintaining horses' weight, especially older or health-compromised ones. Your vet can assess their condition and recommend feeding regimes for optimal winter health.

Dental care:

Dental health is crucial for digestion. Your vet can identify and address any issues that may affect chewing, particularly important when forage quality varies in winter.

Vaccinations and targeted worming programme:

Stay up to date with vaccinations, especially for respiratory diseases (such as flu), to prevent outbreaks in stabled horses. Autumn is a good time to review with your vet the worming requirements for your horse.

Joint and mobility check:

Cold weather can worsen joint stiffness and arthritis. A vet check can spot issues early and suggest supplements or treatments to maintain mobility.

Hoof care:

Winter's wet conditions can lead to hoof problems. Your vet can evaluate and recommend preventive measures or treatments to maintain hoof health.

Personalised advice:

Each horse is unique. Your vet can provide tailored advice based on age, breed, health history, and specific needs to ensure a comfortable and healthy winter season.



To book in a pre-winter health check, please contact the practice

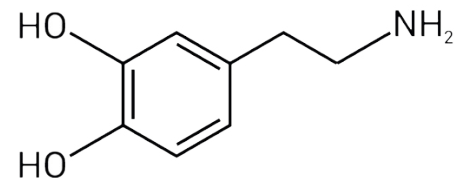
TESTING TIME!

Managing Cushing's Disease (PPID)

The most straightforward and widely used method to test for PPID is the ACTH test. A blood sample is collected and promptly sent to a lab under chilled conditions for analysis of ACTH levels. Horses affected by PPID typically exhibit elevated ACTH levels beyond the normal range.

The reference range for ACTH levels fluctuates seasonally, accommodating the natural increase in pituitary activity during late June to mid-November.

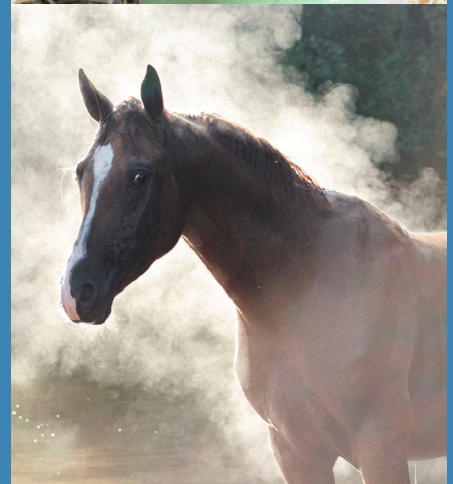
It's important to recognise that although autumn is considered the optimum time generally recommended for PPID testing, due to seasonal hormone fluctuations, testing can be conducted at any time of year if a horse shows symptoms of PPID or if there are concerns about its health.



Horses and ponies with Cushing's disease have low dopamine levels, in part of the pituitary gland, causing the pituitary gland to overproduce hormones.

Common signs of PPID

- Abnormal coat
- Excessive sweating
- Changes in behaviour
- Delayed shedding of winter coat
- Increased thirst/urination/appetite
- Recurrent infections
- Muscle wastage
- Lethargy/weakness



Do you suspect Equine Cushing's disease or is your horse being treated for Equine Cushing's disease? If so your horse may be eligible for a free* diagnostic or monitoring ACTH test. Please use the following link to find out more:

careaboutcushings.co.uk



EQUINE ASTHMA

Equine asthma is a chronic respiratory condition in horses, marked by airway inflammation and narrowing, causing coughing, nasal discharge and laboured breathing. It is triggered by environmental factors like dust, pollen, and mould commonly found in stables and hay. It must be noted that signs can be mild, such as coughing at the start of exercise.

What are the main causes of equine asthma?

Equine asthma is primarily triggered by allergens such as dust, mould spores and pollen, found in the horse's environment. It can also be triggered by poor ventilation, management practices and exercise.

How will a vet diagnose equine asthma?

Equine asthma's varied symptoms make diagnosis challenging based on clinical signs alone. Advanced diagnostics reveal respiratory function and airway inflammation helping vets tailor precise treatments. Though initially costly, diagnostics ensure targeted treatment, reducing over-medication and unnecessary expenses. Investing in diagnostics leads to better outcomes, improved horse quality of life, and lower overall healthcare costs. They also enable monitoring, allowing for effective supportive and preventative measures by tracking the condition and identifying triggers.

What are the diagnostic processes for diagnosing equine asthma*?

Tracheal wash (TW):

A tracheal wash is a diagnostic procedure to assess respiratory health in horses. Fluid is introduced into the trachea via an endoscope and then collected. Performed under sedation for safety, an endoscope is inserted through the nostril into the trachea, allowing visualization and catheter placement. Saline solution is infused and immediately withdrawn, capturing samples of the tracheal lining and material. The collected fluid is examined microscopically and may undergo bacterial or fungal cultures to identify pathogens. This helps vets develop appropriate treatment plans for respiratory conditions.

Bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL):

A diagnostic procedure that collects fluid and cells from the lower respiratory tract for analysis, valuable for evaluating respiratory diseases in horses. A flexible tube is passed through the nasal passages and trachea into the lower airways. Sterile saline solution is instilled and then quickly aspirated back, retrieving cells, proteins, and other substances. BAL provides crucial information on the type and severity of respiratory conditions. Interpreting BAL results requires considering clinical signs, history and other diagnostic findings.

*Most horses tolerate these tests very well with just light sedation.

EQUINE ASTHMA

If you suspect your horse may have equine asthma, please contact the practice.

Endoscopic examination:

This procedure uses a flexible endoscope to visualise the horse's upper and lower airways, allowing vets to observe airway inflammation, mucus accumulation and other changes related to asthma. The endoscope is inserted through the nostril, passed through the nasal passages and pharynx into the trachea, and advanced to the bronchi. Vets carefully navigate the endoscope while observing real-time images on a monitor.

Diagnostics are crucial for monitoring the effectiveness of treatments on inflammation and airway constriction. Vets use these insights to adjust treatment plans, whether by changing medication dosages, modifying environmental conditions, or maintaining the current regime.

How is equine asthma managed and prevented?

Equine asthma can be prevented and managed with proper stable and environmental care. This includes ensuring good ventilation, using dust-free bedding, and providing high-quality, low-dust hay. Regular turnout and minimising exposure to irritants such as mould and pollen can prevent flare-ups. Collaborating with your vet for a personalised management plan is crucial for effectively addressing equine asthma and improving the wellbeing of affected horses.

Caring for a horse with asthma

Opt for low-dust bedding, high quality /low-dust hay, good ventilation, turnout and regular veterinary check-ups.

How can equine asthma be treated?

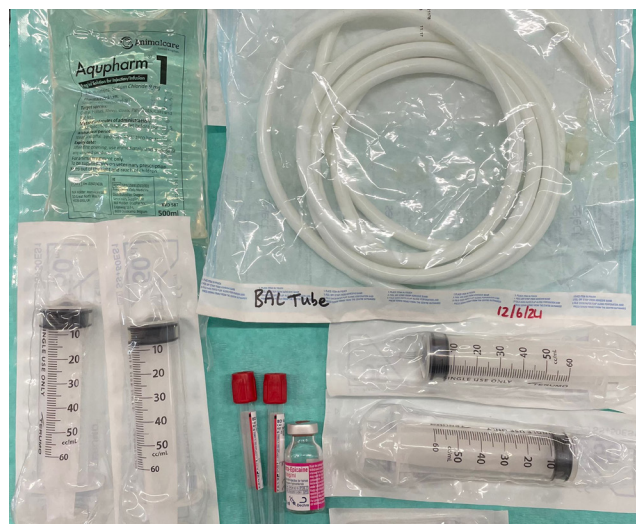
Treating equine asthma effectively involves a comprehensive approach that combines environmental management with medicine intervention.

The environment is crucial in triggering and worsening symptoms. However, severe cases require medication to reduce inflammation and bronchoconstriction. This typically involves corticosteroids or bronchodilators administered orally, by inhalation, or intravenously.

It's crucial to understand that while medicines can help control symptoms, they do not cure equine asthma. Instead, they manage inflammation and improve breathing. Therefore, a tailored treatment approach is vital, wherein both environmental modifications and medicine therapy are customised to suit the individual horse's needs.



Endoscopic examination



Bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL) equipment

EQUINE MUD FEVER

Prevention and management

What is mud fever?

Mud fever, or pastern dermatitis, is a bacterial infection in horses' lower legs, primarily caused by *Dermatophilus congolensis* in wet conditions. Other causes include *Staphylococcus*, *pseudomonas* species, mites, and fungi. Constant wetness of the skin damages its protective layer, leading to infection and inflammation.

Causes

- Prolonged dampness
- Standing in deep mud
- Damaged skin
- Mites, fungal infections, photosensitization, autoimmune disorders
- Regular washing without drying

Clinical signs

- Crusty scabs with moist, ulcerated lesions
- Matted or lost hair with raw skin
- Creamy discharge between skin and scab
- Deep skin fissures
- Heat, pain, swelling, possible lameness
- Severe cases: lethargy or depression



Treatment

- Keep skin clean and dry
- Gently remove scabs, if advised by a vet
- Clip leg hair
- Clean with mild antiseptic/antibacterial/antimicrobial wash, rinse, and dry
- Use stable bandages for support and swelling reduction, if advised by a vet
- Apply veterinary recommended creams with anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties
- Treat underlying causes like mites or fungal infections

How to prevent mud fever

To prevent mud fever in horses, avoid turnout in muddy conditions, especially for high risk horses. Practise good paddock management by rotating fields, laying down hardcore in high-traffic areas and fencing off muddy spots. Regularly groom lower limbs with a soft brush, and ensure legs are thoroughly dried if washed. Daily inspections of the horse's legs can help catch any issues early.

If you are worried your horse may have mud fever, please contact the practice.