



SPRING EQUINE NEWSLETTER

Team Update

Becca Returns to the Team This March

In March, we are delighted to welcome back Becca Fellows from maternity leave after having her little boy Wilf last year. She is a familiar face to many of you who I'm sure will be as pleased as we are to see her back! She will be rejoining the team two days a week initially on a Wednesday and Thursday.



Introducing Harriet Collins to the Team

We are also excited to welcome in a new member to the admin team: Harriet Collins. Our Office ladies are an amazing team but as we are increasingly busy, they need an extra pair of hands! Harriet has worked in a local Small Animal Specialist Clinic but has always wanted to work in the Equine sector whilst continuing to produce and compete her horses.



Expanding Our Imaging Capabilities

We are lucky to have expanded our diagnostic equipment range to include a second logic Q ultrasound scanner with a state of the art probe for musculoskeletal diagnostics.

This will enable us greater availability for your appointments whilst maintaining the excellent quality imaging we have offered previously.



Advanced Dental Care Now Available in Practice

Our practice has developed excellent relationships with local veterinary dental specialists both clinic and ambulatory based to enable us to acquire the best advice and up to date treatment for our patients.

We can now offer wider range of treatments within the practice including:

- High quality diagnostic dental radiographs
- Orosopic examinations
- Diastema treatment
- Incisor extractions
- Treatment of fractured/loose teeth



This hopefully will enable you to access treatment more quickly and more conveniently for many of your dental cases.

We will of course be maintaining relationships with specialists to ensure more complex conditions will be seen quickly, by the most appropriate specialist or one of your choice.

Spring Equine Talk & Social

Ulcers, Behaviour & Veterinary Care

When: Monday 16th March 2026 | **At:** 7:30pm | **Where:** Alresford Rugby Club

Join us for an informative and friendly evening with two knowledgeable speakers:

Hannah Davidson BVSc MRCVS - Veterinary Surgeon and Technical Manager at Norbrook Laboratories Norbrook Pharmaceuticals

Hannah will explore: Equine Gastric Ulcer Syndrome: Signs to look out for, diagnosing ulcers, different ulcer types and treating ulcers and aftercare.

Liane Preshaw BSc (Hons) MSc MPhil PGDip - Accredited Animal Behaviourist at The Horse Trust

Liane will discuss: How meeting horses' behavioural needs can help keep them healthy and how to train them to cope with common veterinary interventions.

Come along to:

- Hear from knowledgeable guest speakers
- Learn useful tips for your horse's health and wellbeing
- Meet friends and fellow horse owners
- Bring friends along too!
- Enjoy tea, coffee and cake

Limited spaces available - secure your **FREE** place today by contacting the practice on **01962 779111** or **office@horsevet.co.uk**.





Joint Health: Keeping Your Horse Comfortable and Mobile

As the days grow longer after a long wet winter many riders are beginning to increase their work programme in preparation for a busy season of riding or competing. This changing intensity may reveal subtle or not so subtle changes in their horses movement. Seasonal shifts can reveal underlying joint stiffness or discomfort, particularly in older horses or those with pre-existing conditions such as arthritis or previous injuries. Understanding how changing weather affects your horse's mobility, and knowing what you can do to support joint health, is essential for keeping them comfortable and active throughout the spring months.

How Seasonal Changes Affect Joints

Just like in humans, shifts in the weather can make a horse's joints feel stiffer. This is often due to:

- **Changes in circulation:** Fluctuating temperatures can temporarily affect blood flow, which may limit the nutrients and oxygen reaching the joints
- **Muscle stiffness:** A change in exercise intensity and change in ambient temperatures eg cooler mornings after warmer days or more demanding work can make the muscles feel less supple, which can make joints feel tighter and slightly increase the risk of strain

Horses may show subtle signs such as:

- Shorter, stiffer strides or reluctance to move
- Hesitation on turns or when stepping over obstacles

- Increased sensitivity when grooming around joints

Supporting Joint Health in Spring

Seasonal changes and changes in exercise level can affect your horses comfort and mobility. Here are some strategies to keep them moving well:

Warm-Up and Exercise

- Gentle warm-ups remain important. Walking for 10-15 minutes before trotting or cantering helps loosen muscles and joints.

Environment and Bedding

- Provide dry, well-bedded areas. Spring showers and damp ground can still contribute to joint stiffness
- Shelter from wind and rain helps reduce muscle tension.

Nutrition and Supplements

Adequate protein and energy support muscle and joint health.

Some horses benefit from joint supplements; always discuss options with your vet before starting anything new.

Seasonal Care

Rugs can still be useful during cooler mornings or evenings. A well-fitting rug helps maintain muscle warmth without restricting movement.

Veterinary Support

Early intervention is key. Persistent stiffness, swelling, or reluctance to move warrants a vet check.

There are many strategies for horses with arthritis or joint issues, and your vet can recommend the best approach for your horse's needs

Key Takeaway

Seasonal changes don't have to affect your horse's comfort or performance. With proactive care, most horses can stay mobile, happy, and ready to enjoy the longer, warmer days of spring.



Coughs, Fevers and Cancelled Plans

Equine influenza (often shortened to equine flu) remains one of the most important infectious diseases affecting horses in the UK. While vaccination has dramatically reduced severe outbreaks, the virus is still circulating and cases continue to be diagnosed every year.

Understanding how equine flu spreads, what signs to look out for and how best to protect your horse is key to keeping both individual horses and the wider equine community safe.

What is equine influenza?

Equine influenza is a highly contagious viral respiratory disease that affects horses, ponies and donkeys. It is caused by specific strains of the influenza A virus, adapted to equines and is not transmissible to humans.

The virus spreads very easily through:

- Direct horse to horse contact
- Coughing and nasal discharge
- Contaminated equipment, clothing and hands
- Shared airspace, including stables, lorries and indoor arenas

What are the signs of equine flu?

Clinical signs usually develop 1-3 days after exposure and can vary in severity depending

on the horse's age, immune status and vaccination history.

Common signs include:

- Sudden onset of fever (often over 38.5°C)
- Dry, harsh cough
- Lethargy and depression
- Reduced appetite
- Nasal discharge (clear to thick and yellow)
- Muscle stiffness or soreness

Even mildly affected horses may continue to shed the virus and infect others, which is why early recognition and isolation are so important.

Why is equine flu still a problem in the UK?

Despite widespread vaccination, equine influenza continues to pose a risk because:

- The virus evolves over time
- Not all horses are vaccinated
- Immunity can wane if boosters are delayed
- Horses frequently travel and mix at competitions and livery yards

Most competition bodies require vaccinating, but vaccinating is just as important for:

- Leisure horses
- Youngstock
- Breeding horses
- Horses that rarely leave the yard

Vaccinated horses that do become infected typically experience:

- Milder clinical signs
- Shorter recovery times
- Reduced viral shedding

It's essential that horses receive:

- A correct primary course
- Boosters at the recommended intervals

If you're unsure whether your horse's vaccination is up to date, your vet can check records and advise on the most appropriate schedule.

What should you do if you suspect equine flu?

If your horse shows signs of respiratory disease:

- Stop all movement on and off the yard immediately
- Isolate the affected horse
- Contact your vet for advice

Recovery and aftercare

Although most horses recover fully, equine influenza can damage the respiratory tract, leaving horses vulnerable to secondary infections.

Your vet can provide tailored advice based on your horse's age, workload and severity of illness.

How can you reduce the risk on your yard?

- Good biosecurity plays a vital role in prevention:
- Isolate new arrivals for at least 14 days
- Avoid sharing water buckets, tack and grooming kit
- Wash hands and change clothing between horses if illness is present
- Monitor temperatures daily during outbreaks
- Keep vaccinations up to date across the yard

Equine influenza is serious but manageable. Good vaccination, early veterinary advice and strong biosecurity greatly reduce risk.

If you're concerned, speak to your vet early. Action protects your horse and the wider equine community.





Equine Herpes Virus

Recognise, Prevent, Protect

Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) is something most horse owners will hear about at some point, particularly when outbreaks are reported in the UK. While the term can sound worrying, understanding how EHV spreads, the signs to look out for and how to reduce risk can make a huge difference in protecting your horse and the wider equine community.

What is Equine Herpes Virus?

EHV is a common virus that affects horses worldwide. There are several strains, but the two most significant for horse owners are:

EHV-1: associated with respiratory disease, abortion in pregnant mares and, in rare cases, neurological disease (Equine Herpesvirus Myeloencephalopathy or EHM).

EHV-4: most commonly causes respiratory illness, particularly in young horses.

Many horses in the UK are exposed to EHV at some point in their lives, often as youngsters and may carry the virus without showing signs.

How does EHV spread?

EHV spreads easily through:

- Direct horse to horse contact
- Nasal secretions (coughing, snorting)
- Shared equipment such as buckets, tack, grooming kits
- Clothing, hands and footwear of people moving between horses

The virus can survive for short periods in the environment, making good hygiene essential during times of increased risk.

Clinical signs to watch for

The signs of EHV can vary depending on the strain and the individual horse. Common signs include:

- Fever (often the first sign)
- Nasal discharge
- Coughing
- Lethargy and reduced appetite
- Swollen lymph nodes

In pregnant mares, EHV-1 can cause abortion, sometimes with little warning.

Neurological signs (rare but serious) may include:

- Incoordination or weakness
- Difficulty standing
- Urinary incontinence

Any horse showing neurological signs should be treated as an emergency.

What should I do if I'm concerned?

If your horse develops a fever or respiratory signs:

- Isolate the horse immediately
- Stop movement on and off the yard
- Contact your vet as soon as possible

Other practical prevention measures include:

- Monitoring temperatures regularly during outbreaks
- Avoiding shared water sources at events
- Cleaning and disinfecting equipment
- Changing clothing and washing hands between horses
- Implementing isolation protocols for new arrivals

EHV in the UK: staying informed, not alarmed

EHV cases do occur in the UK, but with sensible biosecurity, prompt veterinary advice, and good communication, outbreaks can often be contained effectively. Being informed and prepared is far more helpful than being fearful.



EHV Vaccination

Vaccinations for EHV-1 and EHV-4 are available but the use of these vaccinations should be discussed with your veterinary surgeon to ensure it is correct for your setting.

The EHV vaccination should not be considered as an alternative to good biosecurity. We encourage horse owners to quarantine all horses newly arrived on their premises.

Whilst EHV vaccination reduces shedding of the virus and makes clinical signs milder, it does not necessarily abolish either. However, reducing shedding helps to minimise risk to other horses when a horse is infected with EHV.

It is important not to undertake vaccination during an active outbreak and we would always recommend vaccination is done when horses are in a stable population and not in a state of stress.

After the initial booster course, vaccinating needs to be maintained at six-monthly intervals in order to provide the best protection.

If you have any concerns about EHV, vaccination schedules, or biosecurity on your yard, our veterinary team is always happy to advise. Early action protects not just your horse, but the wider equine community too.

Please see our previous newsletter for the latest info on strangles and Strangvac.

Get the latest updates on equine disease outbreaks and surveillance: equinesurveillance.org/landing