

Post Foaling Checks

A visit to check you mare and foal after foaling enables the vet to examine both, identify any abnormalities and take prompt and effective action. Foals have their eyes checked. Turned in eyelids result in painful and difficult to treat corneal ulcers but early identification of the problem enables simple treatments to be carried out to prevent this. Examination of the limbs identifies flexural and angular limb deformities. Advice on the effective management can be given which can prevent permanent damage to the soft skeleton. Meconium constipation can



be treated, cleft palates identified and assessment of nursing and adequate colostrum intake made. Colostrum is the first milk and failure to drink enough can lead to the foal being prone to serious infections. Prevention is better than cure! The heart, circulation and breathing are checked and the umbilicus examined for hernias, bleeding, urine and infection control. The mare's udder is checked for adequate milk, patent nipples and freedom from mastitis. Her birth canal is examined for injury and tears repaired to ensure she is comfortable and able to go back in foal if this is the plan. The placenta is checked to ensure none of it is still in the mare which can lead to infection, toxemia and laminitis. Removal or cleansing of the mare and uterine antibiotic treatment is performed as necessary.

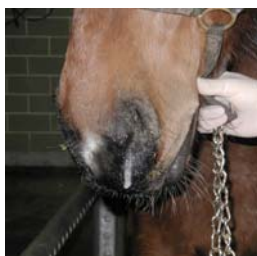
BREATHE EASY

The spread of swine flu this winter highlights the need for the early diagnosis of infectious respiratory diseases so that measures can be put in place to limit the outbreak. At The Barn we have access to an equine respiratory disease diagnostic service – 'RespCheck'. Launched two years and pioneered by Intervet / Schering-Plough Animal Health and implemented by the Animal Health Trust (AHT), RespCheck helps quickly and conveniently identify the cause of infectious respiratory problems in horses.



The service can swab for a range of diseases including equine influenza, equine herpesvirus and strangles, among others. It means potential infections can be dealt with more quickly and the spread of disease prevented with the timely implementation of quarantine and strict hygiene measures. It also provides peace of mind for horse owners by providing a quick diagnosis or ruling out a condition altogether.

More than 700 horses have been swabbed since the service was launched and infectious diseases were identified in fifteen per cent of them.



Horse with early signs of Influenza

We recommend foals are vaccinated against Influenza and Tetanus starting at 6 months of age.

An Eighth Veterinary Surgeon for The Barn

Lizzie Barker BVetMed(Hons), MRCVS joined us on 1st March to expand our team of equine veterinary surgeons. She qualified from the Royal Veterinary College, London University and has gained experience working in equine practice in the west country. Lizzie is a keen show jumper and has an open horse and a youngster she has bought on and is now jumping Foxhunters classes. Her other interests include keeping fit and going to the races. She is looking forward to meeting our clients as the need arises!



Lizzie Barker MRCVS at the 2010 Blue Chip finals

CLIENT EVENING SUCCESS

Many thanks to all of you that came to our recent client evening on Sarcoids and Skin Conditions presented by Professor Derek C Knottenbelt OBE, BVMS, DVMS, DipECEIM, MRCVS, European Specialist in Equine Internal Medicine, RCVS Specialist in Equine Internal Medicine from Liverpool Veterinary College. The evening achieved the best ever turnout of over 200 clients and was very well received. Prof. Knottenbelt is a world expert on sarcoids and skin problems as well as a great speaker. During the talk he also mentioned his involvement in charity work for disabled children in Africa and on the night we raised over £700 for his project. Should you require more information about this or decide to get involved please visit www.spana.org.

Please let us know if you would like a specific topic covered in any of the upcoming client evenings. Just e-mail us at the surgery.



Professor Knottenbelt receiving the BEVA Welfare Award

Foals Legs Straightened at The Barn

We were called to an Andalusian mare having difficulty foaling. All our veterinary surgeons live locally and one was in attendance within 20 minutes. The front legs had not engaged the birth canal. The head had swollen and membranes turned blue so it was necessary to work quickly. The head was repelled, which enabled the legs to be extended and the foal to be delivered. It soon became obvious why the delivery had been difficult. A severe flexural deformity of both knees and front fetlocks afflicted the foal as shown below.



Twice daily physiotherapy, painkiller and muscle relaxant medication and the application of casts improved the knee flexion but the foal was still unable

to walk with the foot on the floor and knuckled over onto the front of the fetlock joints. The foal was admitted to the surgery and a general anaesthetic administered. Surgery was carried out to section the inferior check ligaments of both front legs in order to allow them to lengthen. Excellent nursing by the owners back at home and the skilled application of plastic shoes by the farrier all contributed to the excellent results shown below.



Summer is on the way....along with life's little irritations

As we approach Summer once again, we will soon be into the fly season with the attendant problems. Look out for the following and give us a call if your horse or pony seems in any way distressed by these seasonal summer irritations.

Sweet Itch - an allergic reaction to bites from midges (culicoides), characterised by severe irritation along the mane and tail. When horses rub there is hair loss and infected skin abrasions. Veterinary treatment with corticosteroids may provide temporary relief but long-term steroid treatment may have associated side effects including laminitis, whilst anti-histamines can cause drowsiness and have poor results. Tips for prevention:

- Avoid stabling horses near stagnant water, manure or compost heaps.
- Consider stabling during risk periods of dawn and dusk.
- Mesh screens on stable doors and windows will keep midges out.
- A protective anti-sweet itch rug may help, particularly if you cannot reduce turn-out
- Use an insect repellent, preferably containing DEET (diethyl toluamide) which is very effective although some midges will still bite. Contact us for more advice on suitable products.



Adult culicoides midge biting

Urticaria - a localised skin swelling, which varies from small rashes to larger, fluid-filled plaques over the body. Caused by an allergy to something such as fly bites, contact or ingestion of a particular plant the horse is sensitive to. Larger swellings often worsen as the days progress but usually resolve without veterinary intervention but drug treatment may be necessary. If swelling affects your horse's ability to breathe, seek urgent veterinary attention.

Fly bites - A reaction to saliva from a biting fly resulting in a lump or rash with irritation and soreness. If the horse rubs it can become sore and infected. Cleansing with saline or mild antiseptic solution and removing crusty scabs followed by an application of our fly repellent and antiseptic cream will help. Occasionally allergic reactions require veterinary treatment. NB – there is increasing evidence that flies collecting on wounds or infected bites may increase the risk of sarcoids developing—so keep the flies off! Consider the same prevention measures as for sweet-itch.

Sunburn and photosensitisation - Unpigmented areas of skin such as the muzzle are vulnerable to sunburn and photosensitisation (an exaggerated sunburn). Photosensitisation is triggered by ingestion of plants, including some clovers, alfalfa and St. John's Wort, which makes them more sensitive to sunlight and sunburn. Tips for prevention:

- Avoid turning horses out during the hottest part of the day.
- Ensure there are shaded areas your horse has access to.
- Apply sunblock and soothing salves to affected areas.
- Consider turn out at night and stabling during the day.

Don't forget to take care of yourself too – apply sun block frequently and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration. Riding early in the morning or later in the evening will help to prevent heat stroke, but don't forget to apply insect repellent to dodge those pesky midges!

Thanks to Andrea McHugh, Equine World

