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THE BARN
EQUINE
SURGERY

newsletter
winter/spring 2012



New premises complete!

At last (and only a little overdue), our fabulous new premises are complete, and the builders have officially left.

The building project, which has taken over 3 months to complete, now means we have the most extensive specialist equine veterinary facilities in the area.

We can now boast the following:

- New surgical operating suite
- 3 sets of stocks
- New diagnostic imaging room
- Dedicated equine dentistry area
- Dedicated bone scanning room
- 12 stables for inpatients
- All-weather menage
- Larger refurbished reception
- New coffee machine!

We will be having an open day in the New Year to celebrate so please join us for a drink and a tour of the practice facilities.

Don't forget to look out for dates of this and other events by 'liking' us on Facebook, or following us on Twitter.



Barn Vet Wins Top Honours

Chris Pearce wins Petplan Equine Vet of the Year 2011

This award, sponsored by Petplan Equine, was announced at the glittering annual Animal Health Trust (AHT) Equestrian Awards' gala dinner, held at the Lancaster London Hotel in November.

Horse owners from all over the UK have been nominating vets who they feel are worthy of the prestigious title of 'Petplan Equine Vet of the Year'.

We are delighted to announce that this year's winner was our own vet Chris Pearce - well done Chris!

With over 185 nominations the independent judging panel had a difficult job choosing a winner from the three outstanding finalists. However, they unanimously agreed that the strength of Chris's nominations placed him as the vet most worthy of this year's title.

Isabella von Mesterhazy, Petplan Equine's marketing manager said: "All this year's nominees have shown great commitment to their profession making choosing just one winner very difficult. However, Chris's dedication and commitment, combined with his extensive work in equine dentistry and the support shown to his clients really stood out."

The judges were particularly impressed with Chris's pioneering work in advancing equine dentistry, which they said will have a real impact on horses' welfare, comfort and longevity, as well as his understanding of the importance of horses to their owners and the support and empathy he demonstrates when working with their horses.

On receiving the award, Chris said that as it was a people's award he would like to thank the clients that voted for him very much, as well as all the staff at The Barn for their support - a real team effort!

Winners in other categories included the British Dressage Team, Nick Skelton and Prince Khalid Abdullah.



FOCUS ARTICLE:

ATYPICAL MYOGLOBINURIA - The New 'Grass Sickness'?

October and November have seen an outbreak of Atypical Myoglobinuria cases in the locality, being treated by both ourselves and neighbouring referral practices. Atypical myoglobinuria is seen sporadically in the UK, and is seen in predominantly young animals, with no breed or sex disposition having been identified as yet. The condition is seen in horses and ponies kept at grass, it is thought overgrazed or poor quality grazing with poor drainage are involved.

Many of the grazing areas have contained or been bordered by trees or shrubs, and the fallen leaves/leaf litter in these fields are seen as a risk factor. Past research has also shown that previous manure spreading has increased the risk of the disease occurring. Recent research has linked a bacterial poison similar to grass sickness found in the skeletal muscle of affected horses, but it is not known if this is the trigger for the disease or the lethal factor. Research into nutritional deficiencies in those horses affected is still being investigated. There seems to be a spring and autumn predominance, and unfavourable weather conditions are thought to have a role, with cold damp weather being frequently associated.

The disease can affect individuals or several members of a grazing herd. Current 2011 survival rates, support by previously published data, are only 10-25%. Horses with this disease are often found down in the field, or dead. Horses we have treated at the practice have been collapsed in the field, unwilling to stand or move, with sweating, muscle tremors, increased breathing rate and effort, elevated heart rates and irregular heart rhythms. These animals can often appear to show the similar clinical signs to severe laminitis or colic. Appetite is often present but the affected animal can't physically eat or swallow feed. All have had dark brown / red urine ('myoglobinuria') as a result of muscle breakdown and proteins passing into the urine, and marked elevations in muscle enzymes in

their blood. One of these muscle enzymes, creatine kinase, can be raised above 80000iU/L (normal levels are below 600iU/L!). Muscle biopsy can confirm the condition.

Treatment includes administering anti inflammatory painkillers, other analgesics, intravenous fluids, stomach tube feeding, supportive nursing and care. Once clinical signs are seen there is often rapid deterioration, and prognosis is poor. It had been noted that for a day or two prior to being seen by a vet, these horses have shown other mild clinical signs of increased vocalisation, head shaking and nodding, or stiffness and lethargy. New Spring cases or outbreaks of Atypical myoglobinuria have been seen to follow autumnal outbreaks, and therefore our advice is to monitor animals carefully for early clinical signs, and seek veterinary advice and treatment immediately.



Atypical myoglobinuria - the new Grass Sickness?

Stock should be removed from the pasture if suspicions arise, and co-grazing animals removed immediately, and monitored with blood tests to detect early disease. Young horses should not be grazed on high risk or previously affected pasture, and we advise that appropriate pasture management and animal health care and husbandry are followed.

Dental Expertise Continues

Chris and Amy visited Albuquerque, New Mexico, in September, for the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) Focus on Dentistry Conference. Equine vets from all over the world attended this 3-day conference, with international speakers from leading equine hospitals and research facilities presenting current and future procedures and data on equine dentistry.

Amy and Chris were the only British delegates there, and clients will be pleased and reassured to know that The Barn are providing a top world class service on both routine and referral dentistry, together with advanced procedures for extraction and novel techniques in dental restoration, including root canals and fillings. This confirms our position as a leading referral practice for equine dentistry, without doubt the most advanced in this area, and probably also in the UK.

Nenad returns from USA

Nenad has just returned from San Antonio, Texas, attending the 5 day American Association Equine Practitioners annual convention. This was a chance to hear from world renowned equine vets to present up to date research. Watch out for Nenad in his Stetson!!

Nicky learns more on vettings

Nicky Brooks attended an intensive British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) Pre-purchase Examination day in Lancashire, which means that all vets at the practice are now properly trained and well versed with the BEVA 2 and 5 stage Vetting procedures. These have been revised by BEVA recently and we will be providing information on this in future articles.



Katrina Houlton EVN

Congratulations to Katrina!

Katrina Houlton has successfully finished her Equine Veterinary Nursing programme, passed her exams in October, and

become fully qualified Equine Veterinary Nurse (EVN). Katrina is a valuable member of our nursing team and joins Helena and Ruby as a fully qualified EVN. We are not only delighted with Katrina's achievement but are also proud to have a team of three fully qualified EVN

working at the Barn. There are not many practices in the UK that have more than one qualified EVN, never mind three of them! Qualified nurses are vital to our everyday schedule in helping us with numerous procedures performed at the Barn. Their experience and expertise in looking after everyday cases as well as monitoring serious cases, such as ones recovering from colic surgery, is invaluable to us and all of our patients. We are proud to be able to offer a superlative equine veterinary nursing care. EVN training programme takes at least two years of intensive training and involve multiple examinations that have to be passed to achieve registered standards. More information about training programme can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk

Price Freeze

Despite extremely challenging economic conditions during the past twelve months and a huge investment in our already advanced facilities we are proud to announce that we will keep our prices the same for 2012. We value your custom and try to help as much as we can so there will be no price increase next year. Every little helps!

To make sure that we continue to provide first class service at reasonable prices we regularly check our prices against those prices commonly charged in our area. We are very happy to assure you (despite what other practices may claim!) that our overall prices are lower than those of the other practices. We compare prices for routine procedures but are also very happy to provide a detailed quote for more complex procedures involving surgical procedures.

Loyalty Card

Just a reminder to have your loyalty card present at each vet visit for your horse or pony. Remember that any visit, a zone visit, normal or out of hours visit counts, and that the attending vet needs to date, sign and stamp your card for you during the visit. Some unlucky clients have already had the misfortune to benefit from the free visit already!! Please check out our website for details, and if you aren't in possession of a card at your next visit then please ask.

Don't forget the other ways that we can save you money:

- Zoned visiting service - save up to £35.00 per visit*
- Fixed price dentistry clinic - £73.00 per horse* - fixed price to include dental and oral examination, maintenance rasp, power corrections, VAT, and no extra visit fee or sedative fee - best value in the area!
- Yard visits - NO visit fee for those on larger livery yards...we come to you regularly instead

* conditions apply please contact us for more details or visit our website

Why are we your No.1 choice of equine practice?

All our vets are dedicated 100% horse vets - we don't treat anything else

We provide our own 24 hour emergency service

We can provide a first class mobile visiting service - and a specialist diagnostic and surgical in-patient service - lameness investigations, poor performance, medical problems etc.

We offer a class-leading equine dentistry service, offering all routine, advanced and novel techniques from rasping to fillings and root canal treatments

We take referrals from other practices in dentistry, lameness, imaging (eg bone scanning), medical problems, surgery etc - proving that we are best placed to care for your horse

We have a great team of approachable knowledgeable vets, friendly support staff, brand new facilities and free tea and coffee - pop in and say hello anytime!

All of our staff have their own horses too - we understand your problems!

