



Equine EXPRESS
Shotter & Byers Equine Veterinary Services

EQUINE GASTRIC ULCERS

The term 'ulcers' refers to a break or erosion in the lining of the esophagus, stomach or small intestines. Stomach ulcers occur in horses of all ages but particularly horses in heavy exercise and foals.

SIGNS

The signs of gastric ulcers may include one or more of the following signs:

- Poor appetite
- Weight loss
- Poor performance
- Poor condition including dull coat
- Behavioural changes
- Mild or recurrent colic

Foals may also show teeth grinding (a sign of pain), excess salivation, excessive lying down as well as infrequent nursing and diarrhoea.

CAUSES

Diet - As horses are 'trickle feeders' there is a continuous secretion of acid within the stomach, so prolonged periods without food to neutralise that acid can lead to ulceration. Use of concentrated feeds may also contribute to ulcer risk by reducing the time spent feeding.

Exercise - There is a definite connection between training and gastric ulceration. It has been shown that blood flow to the stomach (which helps to remove acid) decreases with exercise - while increased pressure in the abdomen during exercise pushes acid up (reflux) into the sensitive portion of the stomach.

Stress and Illness - Gastric ulcers can occur in response to shock, disease or traumatic injury. Transportation and stable confinement are also proven risk factors. While psychological stress is difficult to evaluate in horses and foals, stressful

conditions may adversely influence feed intake, resulting in periods of increased stomach acidity.

Bile Acid Reflux - Bile acids may flow back into the stomach and cause damage the stomach lining (ulcerations).

It is important to note, however, that horses can develop severe ulcers even in the absence of the above risk factors.

DIAGNOSIS

While signs can point to a horse having gastric ulcers, only a vet can diagnose them definitively. If your vet thinks that your horse may have gastric ulcers, they can perform an endoscopy. It's a relatively simple, painless procedure, in which a thin optical cable is passed into the horse's stomach to check for ulceration.

TREATMENT

The treatment of stomach ulcers involves a combination of changes to feeding management, medical therapy prescribed by the vet, as well as reducing stress on the horse.

- Antacids
- Zantac, Ranitidine
- Protein Pump Inhibitors (Gastroguard)
- Alkaline Feeds (Calcium Carbonate)

Turnout onto green grass pasture along with altering the feeding regimen will start the ulcers healing. If concentrates are to be fed, they should be fed in small amounts at frequent intervals.

PREVENTION

- Allowing free-choice access to grass or hay
- Feeding more frequently
- Cutting down on high carbohydrate diets
- Using preventative treatment at times of greatest risk

Contact your vet if you think your horse may have the above condition.

Maintaining Gastric Health in Stressed Horses



Horses secrete gastric acid continuously – not just in response to food – and many of the stresses of a modern equine lifestyle such as transport, competition, stabling, limited grazing, and concentrate feeds can undermine gastric health.

That's why we're pleased to introduce **Equitop® Pronutrin** from Boehringer Ingelheim into the practice. It is a feed supplement designed to support the natural protective mechanisms of your horse's stomach, and unusually for a supplement, has been assessed in a number of clinical trials which gives us the confidence to recommend it to you.

Equitop Pronutrin is a natural product which is safe to use every day, can be given alone or with feed, and is tested free of doping substances – so it can be used right up to and throughout competition. It contains proto-pectin fibres derived from apples, wheat fibre, pea fibre and citrus fruits, phospholipid in the form of lecithin, glycerol and natural flavours.

It stabilises and regenerates the protection against the aggressive gastric acids and at the same time prevents an excess of gastric acid in the stomach. **Equitop Pronutrin** can also be used routinely to help against relapses or before situations to support the natural protection of the gastric mucosa.

It is supplied in a 3.5kg tub, which should last a 500kg horse approximately two weeks. For more information or to purchase **Equitop Pronutrin**, please contact the practice on **01306 627706**.

Foal Immunodeficiency Syndrome

Foal Immunodeficiency Syndrome (FIS)



is an inherited fatal disease that affects Fell and Dales ponies and potentially any mixed breed ponies which are closely related to

either of these breeds. Eventually affected foals fail to thrive and succumb to persistent infections and die or are euthanized before they reach sixteen weeks.

After 10 years of research and funding from The Horse Trust scientists at the Animal Health Trust, in collaboration with the University of Liverpool, have identified a mutation that is associated with the

development of FIS. A test has now been developed and can be used to examine the DNA from each pony for the presence or absence of this mutation. Breeders now will be able to make an informed decision on breeding and the disease gene may eventually be eradicated from the population.

Previously there has been no definitive test for an early FIS foal, so diagnosis was made on clinical history and signs as they appeared. In 2010, the test will act as a diagnostic aid to confirm suspected syndrome foals and will be particularly useful before any clinical signs appear. Foal samples submitted will be processed as urgent and the result available in three working days from receipt of sample.

Clinical signs of FIS include scouring, nasal discharge, breathing with

abdominal effort, pale mucous membranes, failing to suckle, frequent chewing movements, dull coat, hunched stance and dull demeanor. If your foal is showing signs consistent with those listed and is of Dales or Fell origin then you should contact your veterinarian for FIS testing. He will test for anaemia and confirm a clinical diagnosis.

Samples should be collected by your veterinarian in the form of a pulled (NOT cut) mane or tail hair sample and submitted to our genetic services lab.

For further information please contact the Fell or Dales Pony Society, or Angie Stagg at the Animal Health Trust on 01638 555645 or via e-mail at FISTesting@aht.org.uk.

For The Beginner or Young Enthusiast

Petplan's equine division has launched a website aimed at equine enthusiasts. The site – www.yourstables.co.uk offers information about horse care and includes a 3D tour of a working yard, including a tack room, stables and clinic.



Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM)

CEM is a venereally transmitted bacterial disease of horses. Three species of bacteria are recognised as liable to cause outbreaks of infectious reproductive disease in the horse:

- *Taylorella equigenitalis* (CEM Organism, or the CEMO)
- *Klebsiella pneumoniae*
- *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*

Infected stallions and teasers are usually passive carriers, meaning that they do not show clinical signs of infection but have the bacteria colonised as part of the flora on their external genital organs. Stallions pass the bacteria on to mares during mating. Bacteria may also pass to mares, directly or indirectly, from infected teasers. It is also transmitted to mares if semen used in artificial insemination (AI) comes from infected stallions.

Equine Viral Arteritis (EVA)

Equine viral arteritis (EVA) is a contagious disease caused by a virus localising in the walls of the blood vessels causing inflammation presenting as fevers, absorptions, reproductive tract infections, muscle & joint stiffness, etc. Infection spreads through transmission of the virus between horses in 4 main ways:

- venereal infection of mares by stallions during mating
- artificially inseminating mares with semen from infectious stallions
- contact with aborted fetuses and other products of parturition
- direct contact in droplets (coughing and snorting) from the respiratory tract.

CEM Swabs -Takes 2-7 working days to process from receiving the sample.

EVA Bloods - Takes 2 working days to process from receiving the sample.

Preserving the Suffolk Horse

The **Animal Health Trust** has recently become involved with the **Suffolk Horse Society (SHS)** in an exciting new project to try and safeguard the future of the ancient Suffolk horse (also known as the Suffolk Punch).



The Suffolk horse is one of England's most ancient breeds and the numbers have been declining rapidly. In 2008, there were fewer than 300 breeding horses in total and is listed as 'critically endangered' by the Rare Breeds Survival Trust.

The project aims to ascertain the current level of genetic diversity within the UK Suffolk horse population. It will also determine whether current breeding practices are sustainable. One result of this will be an evaluation of possible new breeding strategies and their impact on the preservation of genetic diversity in the Suffolk horse.

Phase one is underway. Information gathered on current levels of genetic diversity will be used to predict the success and sustainability of breeding practices. By using computer modeling, the team will demonstrate the outcome of different strategies and the possible risks to health and fertility.

As a rare breed it is vulnerable and the project aims to help breeders make the best use of genetic knowledge in hopes of conserving the breed.



The Royal Veterinary College Laminitis Grant

The Royal Veterinary College in collaboration with the Laminitis Consortium, the UK's leading laminitis research body, has been awarded a grant of £134,425 by the Laminitis Trust, to determine whether there is a difference in the blood concentrations of inflammatory mediators between normal and laminitis prone animals, and to aim to identify the mechanisms by which this difference may affect the foot's blood supply and the cells within the hoof.



The grant commenced in January 2010 and will run over two

years. The Laminitis Consortium will be providing regular updates on progress.



Laminitis is characterised by inflammation of the laminae which can result in separation of the sensitive and insensitive laminae and rotation of the pedal bone within the hoof capsule under the weight of the horse

The RVC proposes that laminitis prone animals have low grade chronic generalised inflammation, a state which is fundamental to their predisposition to laminitis and one which is exacerbated by a lack of physical activity. If the RVC can determine that exercise can counterbalance the effects of increased circulating concentrations of inflammatory mediators in laminitis prone animals, this may significantly reduce frequency of, or even completely prevent bouts of laminitis in prone animals, thus improving their welfare.

This project will enable us to gain further understanding of the risk factors and mechanisms of this important disease and also to evaluate a practical means by which some of the important risk factors may be reversed.

Price Reduction for Pre-purchase Blood Testing

The use of medications to mask defects of wind, limb or temperament in horses offered for sale can be a problem for purchasers, and for veterinarians performing pre-purchase examinations. Drugs which may be used in this way include the phenylbutazone-like drugs, corticosteroids, local anaesthetics, and tranquilizers. If drugs have been used, there may be no detectable signs.

While at the 'vetting', we take a routine blood sample which is stored at the HFL Lab for up to 6 months. This sample can be tested immediately after the vetting for the presence of drugs or at any time whilst in storage. Such analysis, therefore, allows the veterinary practitioner to offer a significantly better pre-purchase test, and protects both the veterinarian and the purchaser.

HFL Labs has recently greatly reduced their price for testing equine bloods for the presence of certain treatment medications.

We will now be offering our clients the option to test for the presence of NSAID, Sedatives, Anabolic Steroids and Synthetic Corticosteroids in the horse's blood, which will be sent to the lab for testing immediately after the vetting. You will be asked this option over the phone when you call in to book a vetting. The price to our clients is **£250.00 + vat**. This fee includes the lab test, handling, and interpretation of the results. You will be required to prepay at the time of booking the vetting.

WELCOME TO THE SHOTTER & BYERS TEAM

Pedro A. Darder Cabrer, LMV, MRCVS



Pedro grew up in Palma de Mallorca, Spain. After graduating from Zaragoza University in 2004 he moved to Paris to follow a post-graduate equine training program at Maisons-Alfort University. In France he completed his first Internship in 2007 at the Equine Hospital of the University of Lyon. From there Pedro moved to Belgium and completed his second Internship at

Dierenkliniek de Bosdreef from 2007-2008. Following this he has worked in an equine practice in Essex for the last year and a half.

Pedro has a particular interest in Lameness, Reproduction and Surgery. When not working, he enjoys trekking and mountaineering, travelling, playing tennis or watching football.

Leo Hirson BSc(Hons) BVSC MRCVS



Leo qualified from Bristol University Veterinary School in June 2009 having obtained a second degree in Anatomy. He has spent the last year undertaking an internship at an Equine Hospital in York where his main interests lay in orthopaedics - diagnosing and treating lameness.

Having a strong equestrian background, he is a keen polo player and plays off a 0 goal handicap, has competed in show jumping at an international level, and has broke thoroughbred yearlings.

In his spare time he is an experienced skier and snowboarder.

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