

Dalehead Veterinary Group Ltd



STATION ROAD . SETTLE . BD24 9AA

MAIN STREET . HIGH BENTHAM . LA2 7LE

EQUINE CLINIC . RATHMELL . BD24 0LA



www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk

EQ-

Tel:(01729) 823538

info@daleheadvetgroup.co.uk

EQUINE NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2015

PASTURE MANAGEMENT



Important factors in the management of equine pasture include providing safe and adequate fencing, which should prevent horses escaping and injuring themselves, along with fresh water being available at all times. Shelter from heat and flies in the summer and from the rain and wind is also required for horses living out 24/7. Trees and hedges can provide some shelter but otherwise a suitably sited field shelter is often advisable. Also, the following pointers should be followed where possible in order to help reduce the worm burden :

- ◆ Remove droppings on a regular basis (preferably daily, but at least twice a week) and don't use horse manure as fertiliser
- ◆ Don't overstock pastures: a maximum of two horses per hectare or 1-1.5 acres per horse is recommended
- ◆ Graze horses of a similar age together – young horses are more susceptible to a higher worm burden
- ◆ Sub-divide grazing areas into smaller paddocks and graze on a rotational basis
- ◆ Harrow pasture during dry conditions to expose soil-borne larvae so that they dry out and die
- ◆ Worm new arrivals for all species of worm and stable for 48 hours before turnout onto your pasture

Endoparasite control is a vital part of pasture management and the regular removal of droppings is the best method to reduce parasite burden. Faecal worm egg counts are useful at certain times of the year to assess worm burden and to help identify horses most sensitive to parasitism. 80% of the worm burden will reside in 20% of the horse population and susceptible horses will require regular worming.

Owners should target the following worms at the correct time of year with a wormer effective at killing them, these would be Encysted Redworm Larvae - late autumn and late winter, Bots - winter, Tapeworm - spring and autumn. Owners should worm all horses and ponies at the same time with the same product and use the correct dose: the recommended dosage will vary according to the horse's weight, estimate weight as accurately as possible using a weigh tape. You should not rely on the blanket use of the same wormer as this may encourage the development of drug resistance in the parasite population. Try to rotate the active ingredient for each grazing season and select one product type and use for the entire grazing season.

We produce an annual worming programme which can be downloaded at www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk/equine/caring-for-your-horse/worming-programme.aspx. Alternatively, contact the surgery on **01729 823538** and speak to one of our **AMTRA qualified** staff.

Important nutrients in your pasture

Nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and magnesium are important nutrients in healthy pasture. Nitrogen promotes rapid green growth, phosphorus is important in the initial root growth and seed production, potassium improves pasture quality and disease resistance and magnesium promotes green, leafy growth. Soils deficient in these elements will produce poor quality grass that grows at a slow rate. Specialised and balanced slow release equine fertilisers may be applied to pasture to optimise grass growth. Fertilisers not designed specifically for equine pastures should be avoided as these encourage rapid, rich grass growth which can lead to colic, laminitis and other health problems.



Check out our website
www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk for more
information about caring for your pet, special
offers, vet and staff profiles and much more!



Matching your horse's diet to his workload



Modern compound feeds are formulated to be fed at calculated levels, according to work intensity, alongside forage of a recognised “average” nutritional quality, to supply calories and nutrients that are lacking in that forage and so provide a fully balanced diet. The nutritional content of forage varies according to type and time of year but typically it can be expected to provide calories, from fermentable fibre and soluble carbohydrates.

Always divide the total concentrate ration into as many small meals as possible to avoid overloading the digestive system. Any changes should also be made gradually – reducing the existing feed and correspondingly increasing the new feed. For some horses, a combination of feeds of different energy levels gives the best results.

Horses have limited appetites

As such, in theory, he can physically only consume the equivalent of 2 to 2.5% of his bodyweight in food, whether forage or concentrate feed, per day. As his energy and nutrient requirements go up, his total diet must be more energy and nutrient dense to supply “more per mouthful”. Choosing more nutritious and digestible forage will help but may not be sufficient so the concentrate feed becomes the focus.

Maintaining forage levels

With a greater amount of calories and nutrients coming from concentrate feed, it is possible that the horse will lose some of his appetite for forage but ideally should still have access to forage ad lib, to satisfy his need to chew and to maintain a healthy digestive system.

The psychological and physiological benefits of this approach far outweigh any which suggest that forage intake should be limited for horses in intense work in an attempt to minimise bulky fibre sitting in the horse's digestive system. The only instance when forage intake really requires management is for the specially good-doer or overweight horse, when a **calorie-controlled** diet is required but not at the expense of fibre intake. Chosen forages should be as low in calories as possible, so stalky, coarser hay over soft, leafy haylage, and may need feeding in small-holed haynets to make a smaller amount last longer.

Essential nutritional support

Whatever level of work your horse is doing, he still needs essential quality protein, vitamins and minerals to support general health and well-being, including tissue integrity, muscle tone and healthy hoof growth. Indeed, ensuring a horse receives these nutrients at all times, even when at rest, helps his body lay down reserves (not fat) and repair and rebuild any injured tissue. For this reason balancers can be useful as they supply all these essential nutrients with no additional calories so ensure a balanced diet at times when recommended amounts of even a low energy feed would provide too many calories.

Matching feed to workload

When looking at mixes and cubes, the idea is to match the levels of energy and nutrients they provide to your horse's requirements. Levels of other nutrients contained by feeds are also matched to the intended workload, with lower energy feeds supplying lower amounts of vitamins and minerals than high energy feeds. Reputable feed manufacturers will also select ingredients for the quality of nutrients they supply and their availability to the horse; there is no point including high levels of a certain nutrient if it is of poor quality and the horse's body is unable to absorb and utilise it efficiently.



What if my horse is a good-doer?

As workload increases the type and energy level of feed will need changing accordingly to deliver additional calories and nutrients in a manageable quantity. Different horses have different metabolisms though so, whilst a horse's requirement for calories (energy) will depend both on workload and body condition, “good-doers” generally have lower requirements whatever the workload. Their requirement for protein, vitamins and minerals however, remains directly related to workload so a good-doer in hard work will still need elevated nutritional support, just fewer calories than a “poorer-doer”. For these horses, a lower energy feed or reduced amount of a higher energy feed, may be best to suit calorie requirements but both would need topping up with a balancer to provide essential nutrients for a balanced diet.

Checking for signs of disease

As owners we can perform regular checks to ensure that any signs of disease are identified quickly. In most cases routine checks are second nature and often you will perform them subconsciously every time you ride, groom, feed, bring in or turn out your horse. Here's a handy list of regular checks to make:

- Skin and coat
- Teeth and eating
- Eyes, ears, nose
- Legs
- Urine and faeces
- Appetite and water intake
- Behaviour



If anything appears out of the ordinary then get in touch with your veterinary surgeon who will be able to give you advice.

Knowing the normal values for things such as breathing rate and heart rate in your horse can be very useful in identifying stress or disease early. Any changes from these normal values could indicate a problem.

What is the normal range of a horse's heart rate?

At rest = 28-48 beats per minute. At exercise = up to 200 beats per minute. The heart rate is measured with a stethoscope or by feeling the pulse in the lower leg or jaw. If at rest the heart or pulse rate is raised this may be a sign that the horse is in pain or stressed.

What is the normal range of a horse's breathing (respiratory) rate?

At rest = 10-14 breaths per minute. Breathing rate can be measured with a stethoscope or watching the sideways expansion of the chest. The rate can often be raised when the horse is stressed or sick.

What is a horse's normal body temperature?

Normal Temperature = 99.5-101.3°F or 37.5-38.5°C



FREE LAB FEES—Cushing's Disease Diagnosis

Talk About Laminitis is a national initiative provided by Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, to improve awareness and understanding of the real underlying cause of laminitis. They are offering free ACTH laboratory fees to detect Equine Cushing's Disease from 1 July to 31 October, to help assist early identification of laminitis prone horses and ponies.

If you feel your horse might be at risk from 'cushing's disease' we recommend that you discuss this with one of our vets. Should you then decide your horse requires testing and wish to take advantage of this offer please visit www.talkaboutlaminitis.co.uk to claim your voucher.* Please contact a member of our equine team for more information on 01729 823538.

*Only one voucher may be claimed per horse. Vouchers can only be used against lab fees for newly diagnosed cushings disease and **not** against follow up blood tests.

Coopers Fly Repellent Plus, the only product licensed to repel and kill flies on horses in the UK, is back!



It is proven as an effective aid in the control of Sweet Itch and for the protection of horses from the misery of flies and lice. A single application provides up to four days fly control and eliminates adult populations of biting lice and viable eggs for up to three months, without staining clothes or tack. The only fly repellent for horses containing Permethrin and Citronellol.

Available as a ready-to-use, topical application, Coopers Fly Repellent Plus is both a cost effective and convenient choice. Supplied in a 600ml pack/bottle, it has a shelf life of up to four years and the non-spray, wipe-on formulation is well tolerated by even the most flighty of horses — PLEASE ASK AT RECEPTION.

DALEHEAD SPECIAL OFFERS

WORM EGG COUNTS We recommend that you have a faecal worm egg count at least once a year to monitor the effectiveness of your worming programme. These are **FREE** if you have bought a wormer from Dalehead in the last 6 months. Please telephone the surgery for details on **01729 823538**.

Vaccination Amnesty Month

Throughout **OCTOBER**, if your horse starts a **new** vaccination course, the 2nd vaccination will be given **free of charge**. A saving of £40.19.

Please note that this offer does NOT include the first or third vaccination, nor does it cover any visit fees. However, you can of course, book onto your usual Zone Visit day for your area or bring your horse into our Equine Clinic at Rathmell to avoid a full visit charge.

For more information or to book an appointment please contact the equine team on **01729 823538**.



Castration Offer

As usual, throughout **October and November** Dalehead are offering a discount on standing castrations when **paid for at the time**.



For castrations done at your own yard or stable there will be a discount of **15%** plus your usual visit charge but if the work is done at our Equine Clinic at Rathmell there will be a discount of **20%** and the benefit of no visit charge.

This offer does not include any drugs prescribed for post castration care or tetanus antitoxin.

Please contact Nicola or Sarah at the surgery on **01729 823538** to book an appointment or for more information.