

Seasonal Diseases ...

So far this year, laminitis has been a fairly big problem. As many of you are aware this condition does not just affect fat ponies, but can affect horses of all shapes and sizes for a multitude of reasons. The laminitis trust has been trying to dispel some common myths on this debilitating disease and these are listed below:

- **Allergies:** there is little evidence that allergies are related to the development of laminitis
- **Pregnancy:** pregnant animals develop laminitis just as easily as non-pregnant mares
- Heat in the feet is an unreliable test of laminitis
- Standing in streams or cold hosing: although the numbing effect of the cold water may make the animal feel slightly better, it is actually detrimental to the feet and **will** make the laminitis worse.
- Laminitis is not hereditary, but bad management from the same owner is! If your horses are overweight then they are much more prone to the development of the disease.
- Laminitis does not just affect the front feet, it can affect the hind feet alone, or it can affect all four.



A bad hoof crack

We have an on-going outbreak of coughing in Ross-shire which has now spread to Inverness. Most of the affected animals are unvaccinated for equine 'flu, so now might be the time to consider checking to see if your boosters are up-to-date! For those of you with competition animals, it may be worth considering bringing your vaccinations forward to the winter months such that the horses are in light work only at the time of booster vaccination.

Equine Insurance ...

Many owners have health insurance for their horse which covers the cost of medical fees as well as the replacement value should he or she need to be destroyed. There are a number of companies providing insurance of this type, but beware that some policies are not all that they seem. There is one company called 'E&L' which market themselves heavily in the press as having low premiums. Some of our clients have found it very difficult to have a prompt or successful claim and two of our clients have written to the insurance ombudsman to complain about the handling of their claims. Although some policies with other companies are slightly more expensive,

should something go wrong and you need to make a claim you will be glad to have chosen one of the better companies.

We have listed some of the companies which we have found helpful and good at dealing with claims.

Scottish Equestrian

0141-427-9898

NFU Mutual

01349-862430

KBIS

0845-345-2300

SEIB

0800-289982

Alternative Therapies

Did you know that we can arrange for a homeopathic consultation or prescription for your horse? Alternative Therapies can sometimes reduce reliance on conventional treatments and these therapies are even covered by some insurance policies.



'Barney' MacLennan, Galcantray



Vets: Keith Chandler & Ian Ross

Welcome to the first edition of Kessock Equine Vets' newsletter. Our aim is to provide horse-owners with the highest standards of equine veterinary & dental care in the Highlands and Moray and we hope that you find the newsletter helpful and interesting. We would welcome digital photos from you by e-mail for future inclusion in the newsletter or for posting on our web site at www.kessock-equine-vets.co.uk

Equine Passports ...

The government's confusion over the issue of equine passports continues and it appears to have underestimated the number of horses and ponies throughout the UK. The legislation is likely to be slightly different in Scotland as opposed to the rest of the UK, so don't believe all you read in the Horse and Hound! Suffice to say that you should have applied for your equine passport by the 30th June and it will become enforceable by the 28th February 2005. This is just as well, because most passport issuing organisations (including our own, PetID) are running at least 12 weeks late, with some issuers taking over 6 months to issue passports. We will continue to supply equine passports (including microchipping) right up to the deadline in February and beyond for only £29.50. When you receive your passport you should endeavour to fill in the section, usually at the rear of passport, which is a declaration on whether you expect your horse or pony to go for human consumption. We will soon start asking to see your passport if your horse has to receive any medication. It will eventually become a legal requirement for the vet to request to see your passport, prior to any treatment being administered.

Loss in Performance ...

It can be very frustrating when your horse or pony performs below expectations. Sometimes he is just unable to do what you are asking of him, but there are many medical conditions that can cause a loss in performance too. So far this year, we have seen an eventer which had inflammation in her small hock joints causing discomfort and an unwillingness to jump, a dressage horse with hooks on the last cheek teeth at the back of his mouth and a mare which turned out to be 8 months pregnant! Fortunately, heart disease is unusual in young horses, but in those animals which are expected to do a lot of fast work, low grade respiratory disease can slow them down or make them tire easily. However, dental disease is a major cause of loss in performance and should never be underestimated. We charge as little as £20.00 + VAT for routine dental care, and the beauty of having a vet do your horse's teeth, is that he can also administer medicines such as antibiotics, painkillers and sedatives, where necessary and remove cheek teeth, all of which an equine dentist or technician cannot do.

New Vet ...

It's been six months since the Highlands first equine practice began and we have recruited our first additional vet, Ian Ross. Ian is a Canadian vet who has worked in equine practice for 5 years in North America. His main interests are in ophthalmology and soft-tissue surgery.





'Ozzy' Kennedy, Culbokie, just a few hours old

If you have any questions on any of the topics in this first issue of our newsletter, then please get in touch.

We have updated our terms and conditions of business and if you would like a copy of this, then please call or send an e-mail to keithjchandler@btopenworld.com

Stud Medicine ...

On top of our success with artificially inseminating (AI) mares this year, from next season we will be able to collect semen from stallions for transport to other parts of the UK. If you have a stallion and are keen on sending semen around the country for insemination, then give us a call in advance to discuss your requirements.

For the insemination of mares, we recommend the use of chilled semen which tends to have higher success rates and is less tricky and less expensive than using frozen semen. Chilled semen can be delivered from anywhere in the UK using an overnight courier service.

Pregnancy Diagnosis – there are a number of ways to check if your mare is pregnant or not. The easiest and least expensive way is to wait to see if she comes back into season or not, but for a more accurate indication, pregnancy scanning is our recommended technique. The mare is examined internally with an ultrasound scanner and this can tell us if your mare is in-foal as well as telling whether the baby is healthy or

detect twins. Our preferred examination dates are 14 – 16 days after ovulation or last covering date. At about day 23 we can often detect a heart beat and although we scan mares right up until late pregnancy, it gets less useful beyond day 35. Other alternative methods include blood and urine sampling. Blood samples can be taken between day 60 and 90 but this particular test is not always accurate, but from day 100-120, there is a blood and urine test for oestrogen which is 100% accurate for the diagnosis of pregnancy.

Web Links ...

Some fabulous horses for sale on our doorstep:
www.caledonia-spoorthorses.co.uk

Up-to-date information on laminitis:
www.laminitis.org

Find out what the British Equine Veterinary Association's stance is on the equine passport issue:
www.beva.org.uk

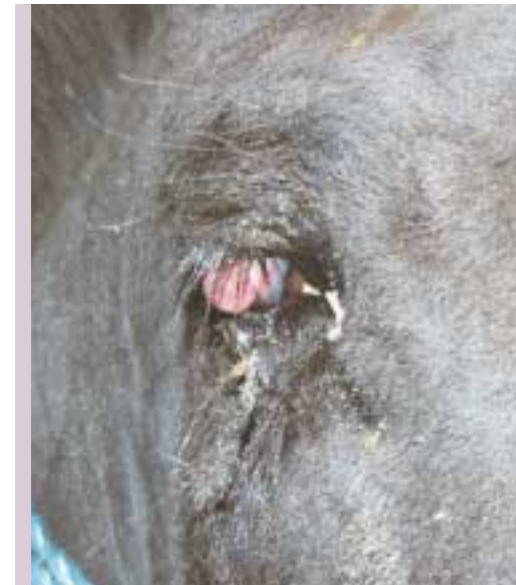
Caption Competition ...



Come up with the winning caption for this picture and earn yourself a fantastic prize. Entries to Kessock Equine Vets, Lower Viewbank, Kilmuir, Inverness IV1 3ZG. Closing date for entries 30th August 2004.

Sore Eyes ...

This is the season for eye problems in horses! These problems fall into three main categories: infections (such as conjunctivitis); injuries (thorns and branches) and a condition known as uveitis. Conjunctivitis is widespread at the moment and is often caused by flies feeding on tears around the eye; the flies leave bacteria behind, which then cause infection. Strong winds or dry dusty environments can exacerbate the condition. Conjunctivitis is usually self-limiting which means that in most normal healthy horses, treatment is not necessary as the horse manages to rid itself of the infection. In some cases the infection invades the deeper tissues resulting in either blocked tear ducts, or persistent infection and damage to the surface of the eye. In these cases your vet must be called in order to assess the eye, preferably in a darkened environment. We would usually want to examine the eye thoroughly with an ophthalmoscope and we usually place some dye on the eye to check for surface damage of the cornea (the clear-glass on the front of the eye). Horses don't cope with eye pain very well and the one thing you don't want is to end up with a permanently damaged eye such as the one shown here. Even if no surface damage is visible, damage to the deeper tissues can result from a poorly



A ruptured eye

managed infection resulting in reduced vision. Treatments vary from eye cream to be administered every second day (for simple infections), to the tears ducts being flushed out and in the most serious cases, to a tube being stitched into the eyelid to administer medications every 2 hours, for serious infections.

A good rule of thumb which you can employ is, if the eye is painful or if one pupil is smaller than the other then your vet should be called out. Whilst waiting for the vet to arrive your horse should be stabled out of direct sunlight, which can make eye pain worse. Uveitis (sometimes called equine recurrent uveitis) is a particularly painful condition of the eye that affects all equine animals. Although uveitis is more common in North America and in the rest of Europe we do see it here from time to time. Affected animals develop a runny eye and haziness to the deeper structures in the eye.

The pupil is always smaller than it should be and the small muscles that control the pupil's movements go into spasm resulting in further discomfort. Uveitis can be straightforward to treat if it is caught early, but it can be difficult to prevent it returning in the future and resulting in permanent damage to the eye.

Tying-Up ...

Unusually, we have seen a number of horses and ponies this year who have 'tied-up'. 'Tying-up', 'set-fast' and 'azoturia' are different names for the same condition which usually results in animals becoming very sore with firm muscles. The condition can vary in severity from a mild loss in performance right through to severe cases where the animal is unable to move, sweats, appears colicky and may even collapse. Occasionally, the urine turns dark brown (myoglobinuria) and this can result in some kidney damage. Fortunately azoturia is rarely serious and is usually treated with anti-inflammatory pain-killers such as flunixin. Classically, the condition occurs after a period of rest whilst on a full competitive ration and is more common in hot weather. Affected horses need some time off work, which can vary from a few days to a month. Irrespective of the rest period, we usually like to blood test horses which have had azoturia before they re-start exercise, to insure that their muscle enzymes (chemicals released into the circulation at the time of muscle injury) have returned to normal. Dietary changes afterwards can prevent the condition recurring.



'Katy' MacKenzie, Aultbea