

Equine Newsletter – August 2009

TAKE (FLY) CONTROL THIS SUMMER

Flies, mosquitoes and midges are all active through the summer months, hatching and pestering our horses. Not only are they very annoying, but many carry diseases which although not currently life-threatening to the UK equine population, can certainly be cause for future concern. To ensure your horse's welfare, and your own sanity from the biting horrors, it's important that you have an active summer fly control plan in place.

Sanitation is the best first line of defence in the yard. If your horses are still stabled, muck out regularly and, because muck heaps provide perfect conditions for bugs in the summer, consider getting muck removed regularly. If flies are a particular problem in the stables, consider using fly traps and fly paper strips. These won't control the general fly population but will help to reduce the stress and irritation for the stabled horse.

If you haven't already done so, wash down unused stables with an antibacterial solution. As well as muck, mosquitoes love water. Check there isn't any stagnant water lurking in the yard or fields in the form of disused water buckets, and make sure the water supply in the field is fresh and clean.

Good stable management will go some of the way to having a bug-free summer, but the most effective approach will be the regular use of a proven fly repellent. Not all fly

repellents are the same so be sure to research in detail the different products on the market, some cheaper formulations require daily, sometimes twice-daily applications, which can become costly in the long-run. Try to pick a repellent that contains permethrin which not only repels but also kills biting and other flies on horses. Coopers Fly Repellent Plus contains permethrin and can be used to treat and control louse infestations, manage sweet-itch as well as being a fly repellent. Available through the practice, one treatment provides up to four days protection, depending on the conditions.

The use of protective fly gear, including fly-sheets and masks, has become increasingly popular and can offer some relief to flies. If you choose to use either, make sure that these are washed regularly to prevent a build-up of dirt.

WORMING.

For those of you not on the Equine Health Plan/Loyalty Plan horses and ponies should be wormed with Panacur in August to deal with Roundworms. A double dose of Pyratape P in October will eliminate Tapeworms.

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PASSPORTS.

All the passport legislation that has been building up over the past few years has now come fully into effect. So, we have tried to simplify the confusion over all the legislation of recent months:-

- All foals born after the 1st July 2009 must be microchipped and a passport obtained.
- All horses without a passport on 1st July 2009 must be microchipped and a passport obtained. This passport will already have section IX part II completed.
- If the horse, pony, foal or donkey is not intended for human consumption the passport should be signed appropriately and the prescribing vet informed for their records.
- If a passport is not available at the time of treatment (of a young foal for example) you and we sign some paperwork and you keep it and attach it to the passport when you get one.

The reason for the paperwork:

Horses are classed as food producing animals by the EU. Therefore in order that vets can prescribe drugs for them you either need to record in the passport that they are NOT for human consumption or you record every drug that we give them!

The main problem for us is if you do intend your horse to go for human consumption then there are many common drugs that we cannot use – for example 'bute'. *Don't worry – there are alternatives.*

What do you need to do?

Go to section IX in the passport (if you have an older passport you might need to send it back to the issuer to have a section IX added to it). Fill in and sign Part II. Some passports also have a space for a signature of a 'competent authority' any of our vets can sign this for you. When you show us the signed passport (for example at the surgery when

picking drugs up, when we come and do a visit or a routine vaccination) we record the fact and note it on your horse's record at the surgery. Once we have recorded the details appropriately, prescribing will not be a problem for us or you thereafter.

Many clients have been delighted to comply as they see it as the only way that their horses can continue to have drugs such as 'bute'.

We have checked many signed passports already but please bear with us and the ladies in the office over the next few months while we cope with the legislation.

Please note that unlike microchipping a dog or a cat, microchipping a horse is deemed to be an act of veterinary surgery so only a vet can microchip your horse, pony or foal.

Just be thankful you are not a farmer. A typical dairy farmer will have 3-400 passports and every time a calf is born the farmer has to apply for a passport immediately!!

WEST NILE VIRUS

This disease is spread by infected mosquitoes and causes neurological signs in the horse. It can be a very debilitating disease and can kill the horse. It is endemic in the USA and Italy.

We have been warned about it because infected birds can carry it during migration and infect the insects which subsequently bite the horse. We are not greatly alarmed by the news of this disease nor have we seen any cases. The good news is, should it become a problem in this country, there is a vaccine and it is proven to work in the face of an outbreak.

Further information about this disease is available on www.westnile.eu