



White Lodge Equine Newsletter

Autumn



Introduction

Welcome to the autumn newsletter

It has been a tough summer with the dry weather and hard ground. Our vets have still been seeing a high number of cases of laminitis, despite the lack of grass growth. This can be due to the stress caused by the dry conditions, causing the grass to release high sugar content. Please remain vigilant as we move into autumn and the rain improves grass growth!



We have also welcomed back Ashleigh Bevis after her maternity leave. If you see her out and about, be sure to give her a wave and congratulate her on the birth of her healthy baby boy Archie.



Time to test for cushings

Autumn is a very good time to test ACTH levels. Your horse's natural ACTH levels are highest during autumn, which improves the accuracy of the test. So, if you are suspicious that your horse may have cushings or if you require an annual test to check your medication doses, book in your blood test!

The **free testing** period runs from **September – October**. This offers a free lab test through the *Care About Cushings* website. Please note, the visit and taking of blood is still payable.

<https://careaboutcushings.co.uk>

Atypical Myopathy

Autumn is time to prevent sycamore poisoning!

- Reduce the risk of horses consuming sycamore seeds and leaves by clearing them from the pasture regularly
- Watch out for seeds, as even paddocks free of sycamore trees may still be at risk from seeds being blown onto the pasture
- Provide supplementary forage to horses on poorer grazing to help minimise the risk of them foraging for alternative food such as the seeds.
- Feeding hay from the floor or close to sycamore trees can increase the risk of accidentally ingesting sycamore material, so hay feeders could help to prevent against this

Autumn Colic

What is colic?

Colic is a term used to describe abdominal discomfort in horses. This can be caused by a number of things, such as gas build up, intestinal spasm or an impaction of feed/fecal matter.

Why is colic more prevalent in Autumn?

Autumn can be a high-risk time of year for colic. This is usually because of the change in weather, feeding, exercise and management.

Horses are often stabled for longer at the beginning of Autumn, to avoid the wetter, colder weather. This increased duration of stabling can slow the transit of food along the horse's intestines. This is one cause of colic, usually causing an impaction colic.

Another cause of colic is the change in feed – perhaps being fed more grain as their workload increases and the goodness in the grass decreases. The horse's gut is very sensitive to changes in feed, particularly larger amounts of concentrated feed. Horses have evolved to eat forage such as grass and hay so their digestion alters when large amounts of concentrate feed enters their stomach. This can cause gas, bloating and spasmodic colic.

Change in management, such as stabling overnight rather than in the daytime, is another possible cause of colic.

Clinical Signs of Colic

- Dullness
- Inappetence
- Reduced number of droppings
- Flank watching
- Pawing the ground
- Rolling
- Sweating

If you notice any of these signs, please call your vet.

How to Prevent Colic in Autumn

1. Feed

- Introduce concentrate feed over a period of two weeks, slowly increasing the amount to the required amount
- Where possible, feed smaller feeds at more regular intervals throughout the day. Rather than fewer large feeds
- Allow access to forage

2. Exercise

- Increase exercise intensity gradually based on initial fitness levels
- Walking stimulates gut motility, which prevents impaction colic

3. Management

- Where possible, increase the time stabled gradually
- Turnout in a round pen or sand arena can be a good alternative if paddock turnout is not available

Treatment

Colic is a veterinary emergency so please call the vet if you see any of the signs. Your vet will examine your horse and may recommend further diagnostic tests. Some horses require pain relief and smooth muscle relaxants. Others need fluid therapy, light exercise or a period of time without feed. If the colic signs do not resolve, your vet may refer your horse for hospitalisation.



INSOL VACCINE

- Now is the time to consider ordering your sweet itch vaccines.
- Please call your vet to discuss any symptoms of sweet itch and how the vaccine may help your horse.
- We recommend to vaccinate your horse in Feb-March, before the biting midges come out.

