

White Lodge Equine Clinic

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Welcome to our Spring Newsletter!

After hoping we were heading back to normality at our last newsletter, we've again had to adapt back to COVID-19 lockdown measures, and thank you again to all of our clients to being so understanding with us. Hopefully it won't be too long before we are able to return to normality for good!

In staff news, Matteo has left us to pursue his interest in equine stud medicine, and Hannah May Martin BVM BVS MRCVS started with us in March. Hannah qualified from Nottingham University in 2019, and has been in mixed practice (with a focus on farm animals) in Oxfordshire since qualifying.

Hannah will be working mainly within our Farm and Equine practice, and we're really excited to have welcomed her to the team.

Hannah has moved down with her horse, and is a keen eventer in her spare time, as well as enjoying netball and rugby.



WHEN SHOULD I BE WORMING MY HORSE?!

Knowing when to worm your horse and what to use can be really confusing for most owners and the correct protocol will vary from yard to yard depending on paddock management, types of horses and previous worming history.

As a quick guide we recommend:

- Worm for tapeworm and encysted small red worm in November/December - use a combination product containing praziquantel and moxidectin such as Equest Pramox
- Use faecal egg counts from mid-March through the summer to assess worm burdens - we can advise on the best products to use (if any) based on your egg count results.
- Try and take faecal samples 3 times from March - October.
- Faecal egg counts won't, however, pick up tapeworm so it is important that you either treat your horse for tapeworm in the winter, or do a saliva/blood test to check if a tapeworm treatment is needed.

If you have a new arrival to the yard with an unknown worming status/history, use a combination wormer to start with then use faecal egg counts.



Cyathostomins (small redworms)



Anoplocephala tapeworms

GETTING COMPETITION READY?

6 month flu boosters

Don't forget that most venues and competitions now require your horse to have had a flu vaccine within the last 6 months!

These boosters should also be given at least a week before any competitions, and can be done on zone visit days. Now is a good time to go and check your passport to see if your horse needs one!

Equine muscle builder

Trying to get horses fit again after such a long period without being competition fit can be a real challenge (especially with our recent lack of grass growth!!).

We stock our own brand of in-feed supplement containing optimum amounts of key amino acids to help get your horse back into peak condition, and to aid muscles recover quicker from exercise.



Focus on: OBESITY

Equine obesity rates are estimated to be between 30-50% in the general UK horse population, but as high as 70% in our Native ponies. Obesity in horses can predispose them to a range of health problems - including joint/tendon problems, laminitis, and insulin dysregulation. Laminitis is one of the most common reasons for euthanasing horses.

Is YOUR horse obese?:

Studies have shown that horse owners generally have a poor ability to recognise obesity in horses, especially when such a high proportion of our horses are overweight, it is easy to 'normalise' the fat horse.

Phrases such as "he's certainly in show condition!", "of course he's got an apple bottom, he's a cob!" or "he's looking a bit too well, he's a good doer!" are unfortunately used all too often to justify our overweight steeds.

If using a "body condition score" scale of 0 (really thin) - 5 (really fat), we should be aiming to keep our horses at about a 3/5. However slightly underweight horses are prone to less health problems than those slightly overweight! Some laminitic ponies may need to be a 2.5 or even 2 out of 5.

A 3/5 is described as:

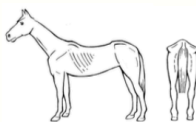
- Pelvis - covered by fat and rounded. Pelvis easily felt
- Back and Ribs - Ribs just covered and easily felt. No gutter along back. Backbone well covered but spine can be felt.
- Neck - No crest (except for stallions). Firm neck

Weight Loss Management Tips

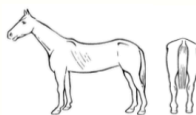
Put simply, as with all species - moving more and eating less is the key to weight loss. However, horses can present particular challenges due to their grazing habits and inability to not eat for long periods.



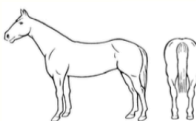
0 - VERY POOR



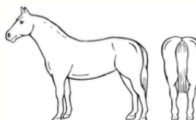
1 - POOR



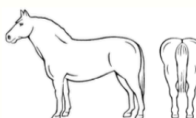
2 - MODERATE



3 - GOOD



4 - FAT



5 - VERY FAT

- Horses that need to lose weight should be fed no more than 1.5% of their bodyweight total dry matter per day
 - This means that a 300kg pony should be eating no more than 4.5kg total dry feed per day. Keeping a horse stabled is the only reliable way to know exactly how much they are eating, and this is necessary if a horse's weight is putting them at immediate risk
- Reducing grazing
 - Turning horses out into already well-grazed paddocks
 - Reducing paddock size
 - Strip grazing
 - Using a grazing muzzle
 - Ensure the muzzle fits correctly to allow eating and drinking, and remove muzzles daily
 - Many horses will 'binge eat' after a muzzle is removed
- Increasing exercise if it is safe to do so
 - Walking is a very gentle exercise for horses, incorporate hill work, and try to trot or canter more to burn more calories
 - If your horse can't be ridden then consider in-hand activities, lunging, horse-walkers, or leading from another horse
- Reducing hard feed
 - Most horses and ponies fed grass don't need any hard feed unless in hard work. However a low calorie balancer ration is necessary for those on poor pasture or fed only hay
- Rug less so your horse has to use some energy to keep warm while out

Monitoring weight loss

Investing in a weigh tape is a good way to monitor your horse's progress. Although they may not give an accurate reflection of actual weight, you should hopefully be able to see the numbers reduce! Good photos will also provide an accurate record of any progress.

Struggling to lose the weight or unsure if your horse needs to lose any weight?

Some medical conditions may make it difficult for your horse to lose weight. If you are concerned about weight loss or not sure if your horse is overweight, then please give one of our vets a call to discuss.

