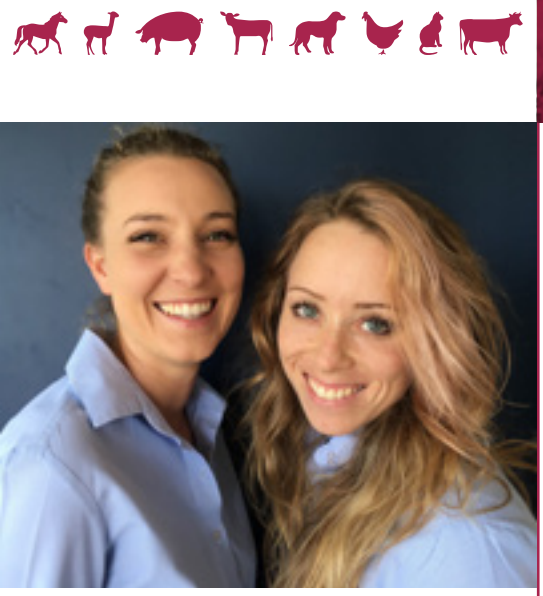
TOTALLY VETS
ANIMAL CARE & EXPERTISE



VET magazine

EQUINE VETNOTES

MAY 19

IN THIS ISSUE ...

The summer is officially over and we're heading into colder weather now.

This means some specific health issues might be lurking around the corner. We hope this newsletter will assist you in keeping problems at bay and recognize any health issues early. If you have any doubts about your horses' health or welfare, or would just like to know more about how to keep your horse healthy, have a chat with us!

ELLIE GOT MARRIED!!

Our dear equine vet Ellie got married!!!

She and her husband Sam had a beautiful wedding at a winery in Melbourne, Australia. It was a perfect day with family and close friends, set on a beautiful hill with beautiful weather. We wish Ellie and Sam a life full of love, laughter, passion and friendship!

MUD FEVER

Anna van Bergen

We're getting into that rainy time of year, which means some horses can get mud fever.

Mud fever is a condition of the skin, that can be caused by a variety of factors. When the skin is kept too moist for too long it becomes susceptible to pathogens that are commonly all around us. The horse that's on pasture, or in a muddy paddock in particular, is surrounded by many bacteria, fungi and possibly mites and lice. When the horse stands in a wet paddock for too long, the natural barrier of the skin weakens and bacteria, fungi and mites can start to do harm. These pathogens feed themselves on the skin and proliferate so that numbers expand. If we don't do anything and the horse stays in this moist environment, then the problem worsens. This can lead to other issues such as wounds, cellulitis, fever, lameness, etc.

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT THIS SITUATION?

The skin needs enough time to recover after having been wet for part of the day. Obviously, the best thing would be if your horse can retreat to an area where he/she can be dry and out of the mud. Unfortunately, not everyone has the luxury of a dry and clean area. This means that you have to be creative about how you offer your horse protection and make sure you're on to it in the early stages, before it becomes more severe.

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QUIZZZZZZ...

Check out our website for the answers:
www.totallyvets.co.nz

1. What's the capacity of an adult horses' stomach?
   - **a.** 8-15 litres
   - **b.** 15-18 litres
   - **c.** About 20 litres

2. What's a horses' normal temperature at rest?
   - **a.** 36.5-37.8°C
   - **b.** 37.0-38.5°C
   - **c.** 37.4-38.0°C

3. How much does a 450kg horse drink?
   - **a.** 20-32L a day
   - **b.** 15-25L a day
   - **c.** 20-32L a day

4. At what age does a horse lose its lower centre front baby teeth?
   - **a.** 1.5 year
   - **b.** 2 years
   - **c.** 2.5 years

5. How much saliva does an adult horse produce in a day?
   - **a.** 19-24 litres
   - **b.** 20-30 litres
   - **c.** 35-40 litres

...MUD FEVER CONTINUED

Mud fever doesn't usually disappear on its own because the bacteria and other pathogens involved sit in the skin and the debris of the crusts, and keep eating away on the skin. This means that the longer you wait, the more intense treatment is going to have to be.

When mud fever goes bad, veterinary attention is needed to treat the wounds properly and protect the horse from cellulitis, fever and lameness. So, if your horse has mud fever and you don't know how to treat it, please give us a call at 063565011 so we can offer advice or a visit if needed.

WHEN AFFECTED BY MUD FEVER, THE MAGIC WORDS ARE CLEAN AND DRY.

1. **ADDRESS THE CAUSE**: Take your horse out of the wet / muddy environment and take it to a dry / clean environment.
2. **CLEAN:** Wash your horses' legs with betadine. It's good if you can get rid of the crusts, but try to do so without opening the skin up or making it bleed, because that gives the bacteria another opportunity to invade. Clip your horses' hair on and around the affected areas. This gives you a better view and so a better handle on the situation. It also gives dirt less to stick to.
3. **DRY:** Dry your horses' legs thoroughly with a clean towel. Be careful with sensitive areas, but dry them as well as you can.
4. **PROTECT:** Although mud fever is usually not perceived this way, we're basically treating wounds. The affected skin is wounded, even if it's not gone through the entire thickness of the skin. This means you're now treating a wound. Wounds don't heal overnight and they need attention. They need to be nurtured, protected against bacteria and not dry out. By applying a cream to affected areas you can provide these things. There are many different products available. Make sure that the product that you are using is not too aggressive on the skin (which some are in an attempt to kill bacteria). At first, it can be good to use a product that is active against bacteria (for example, manuka honey, creams with antibiotics in them, etc.). However, when the situation seems under control, you can also use products that protect against new bacteria either by forming a thick layer over the skin, or by creating a non-friendly environment for bacteria (zinc ointments, thick pastes, etc.).

Sometimes we need to provide proper wound care, and bandage with dressings. If your horse is developing cellulitis (legs swelling up), check with us to see if your horse needs antibiotics or any other care. If your horse has a fever or has become lame, then please give us a call.

6. Can a miniature horse have a higher heart-rate at rest?
   - **a.** Yes
   - **b.** No

7. What can cause proud flesh in a wound?
   - **a.** Not bandaging, movement, exudate, drying out
   - **b.** Movement, bandaging, flies
   - **c.** Not enough dressing, lameness

8. Wolf-teeth should always be removed?
   - **a.** True
   - **b.** False

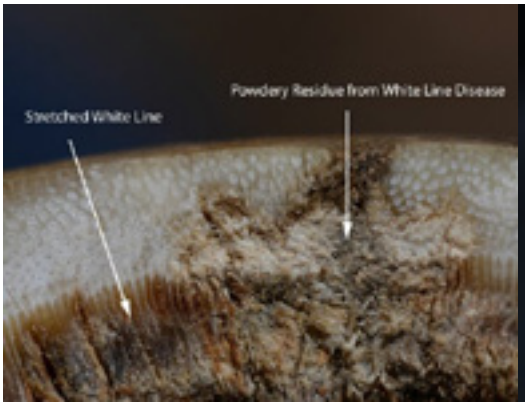
9. Does a horse have a gallbladder?
   - **a.** Yes
   - **b.** No

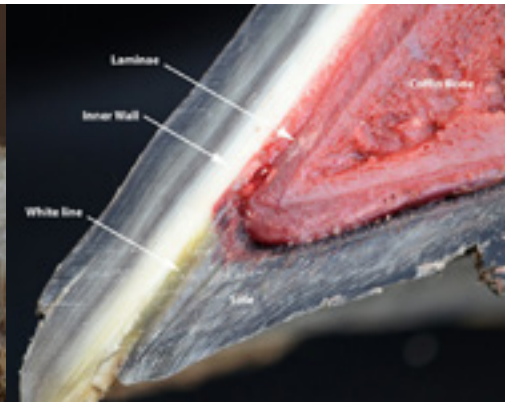
10. What colour is this horse?
    - **a.** Grey
    - **b.** Appaloosa

SEEDY TOE

Anna van Bergen

A lot of people are familiar with seedy toe. It can be very hard to prevent or treat. Sometimes it just keeps on coming back. What causes seedy toe and what can we do about it?





Seedy toe is a progressive separation of the inner zone of the hoof wall. It may be seen first at the white line but actually affects the zone of contact between the hard outer wall and the inner layer of hoof tissue that lies against the white line. It starts at the sole and works its way up towards the coronary band. Long toes and poor hoof conformation can predispose a horse to seedy toe, but during the wet seasons the main cause is usually excessive or prolonged moisture and subsequently infection with bacteria and/or fungi.

Seedy toe might just be an incidental finding during routine trimming. In the early stages you might only notice a powdery spot in the white line area. The horse might give a pain response to hoof testers, there may be heat noticeable, or increasingly flat soles. In time, seedy toe will spread and cause the hoof wall to separate in a larger area. Hoof wall growth may slow and be of poor consistency. The area of hoof separation may sound hollow on percussion. Seedy toe only causes lameness in severe cases. If there is doubt about whether laminitis is present, radiographs can help visualise the coffin bone or a separated hoof wall.

TREATMENT IS DIRECTED AT OPENING UP THE ENTIRE AFFECTED AREA, TREATING IT WITH PRODUCT IF NECESSARY, AND KEEPING IT CLEAN AND DRY UNTIL NEW HORN HAS FORMED.

- **DEBRIDEMENT:** All infected tissue must be removed. This can sometimes be accomplished with a hoof knife and scraping until healthy tissue is encountered. In more advanced cases, the hoof wall over the affected part needs to be removed. Problems in resolving the condition are often blamed on failure to eliminate every bit of infection. A farrier may need to examine the horse as often as every ten days to cut out areas that show damage.
- As said before, some cases resolve after debridement only. In other cases, the second step is application of an antibacterial or antifungal product. A long list of commercial hoof disinfectants have been used with varied success. Anecdotal evidence to the contrary, no one product seems to be effective in every case. A veterinarian's recommendations can help an owner choose a product that will stop the infection without damaging healthy tissue.
- A common problem is recurrence of the problem. It is therefore very important to keep the area dry and clean to prevent reinfection.
- Keep the pressure off the affected area by trimming it back (by creating a bevel or a special shoe). Any conformational issues need to be addressed. New horn growth takes several months to a year depending on the size of the defect. Shoeing helps support the hoof and keep pressure off the toe. Depending on the situation, use egg-bar or heart-bar shoes, glue-on shoes, or shoes with extra clips or screws may be preferred.

In many cases the infection is quite difficult to eliminate, and even in horses that seem to recover completely, recurrence is frequently seen. This means that it's very important to look at what circumstances have caused the seedy toe, to address the situation for the future.

Unfortunately, in New Zealand most horses stay outside in a wet paddock for long periods at a time. This is presumed to be the reason that seedy toe is so prevalent here compared to other countries.

SNIFFLES OR ALLERGIES?

Anna van Bergen

During the summer months we see more allergy related problems, in autumn we see more cases of the sniffles. However, both allergies and the sniffles happen at any time of year. So how do we know the difference and how do we treat?

During an allergic episode, the trigger causes the airways to constrict, which makes passage of air more difficult. Mucus accumulates, further decreasing the diameter of the airways. Breathing becomes laboured (visible as an "abdominal push" at the end of the breath). Changes also occur in the deeper airways, in the air-sacks where oxygen exchange takes place into the blood. Immune cells and mucus-producing cells increase in number, and occupy the surface where oxygen would otherwise be exchanged. The blood receives less oxygen and to compensate for that, the horses' respiratory rate goes up.

Besides an increased respiratory rate and more abdominal breathing, the horse also starts to cough and clear-white to very thick white mucus can come out of the horses' nose every now and then. In more insidious cases there might only be an incidental cough, very low amounts of clear nasal discharge, a slightly increased respiratory rate (which often goes unnoticed) and the respiratory difficulties can cause performance issues.

If left untreated, every episode results in damage of the lung tissues and scarring. Over time the damage becomes irreversible and can not be resolved with medicine. It is therefore very important that the disease is diagnosed, treated and further prevented at its early stages.

Sniffles is quite a different thing. First of all, it's caused by a bug, usually viral. Viruses are known to be able to spread through the air when a horse sneezes or coughs, or via nasal discharges directly or via objects or the handler's hands. When a horse has the sniffles he'll usually cough and have nasal discharge. The respiratory rate can also go up and can become more laboured because of the mucus in the airways. So how do we differentiate?

THERE ARE SOME SIGNS THAT CAN HELP US. HOWEVER, THESE DIFFERENCES ARE NOT ALWAYS CLEARLY PRESENT.

- The cough may be more productive or wet-sounding with sniffles, and is often more dry with allergies
- The nasal discharge usually doesn't become yellow or green with allergies
- If the horse has a fever it's more likely that the horse has caught a bug.
- The lung sounds can be different between allergies and the sniffles.
- A blood test can show general "sick horse" changes when a horse has a pneumonia. Allergies usually only show changes in the lung-fluid sample, but not in the blood.

If the therapy for equine asthma would be applied to a horse with the sniffles, it would worsen the infection. If the therapy used for the sniffles is applied in a horse with equine asthma, the issue would not resolve.

Interestingly, studies suggest that in some cases equine asthma can be started off by an airway infection. In these cases, the immune system has not only identified a bacteria or virus as "the bad guy", but also common particles in dust and hay that sit in the horses' environment and are inhaled by the horse. These common particles are then seen as "the intruders" and set off the body's immune system whenever they are breathed-in.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If your horse is coughing or has nasal discharge, record your horses' respiratory rate at rest (8-14 breaths/minute), take your horses' temperature and give us a call.

Together we can decide whether or not your horse might need something to help clear the mucus and stop the coughing, or treat a bug.

OUR SERVICES

- **Vaccinations**
- **Castration**
- **Pre-purchase exams**
- **Dental exams**
- **Nutrition**
- **Reproduction exams and AI**
- **Lameness exams**
- **Wounds & emergency care**
- **General health exams**
- **Radiography**
- **Endoscopy**
- **Electrocardiography**

For our dedicated equine afterhours emergency service (shared with Equivets) call **027 487 8479.**

UPCOMING EVENTS

Our equine vets will be guest speakers at the Equine Expo, Saturday 25 May, Manfeild Stadium Feilding

Come along to our **First Aid talk** in the upstairs suites at **1.15pm.** Come and **visit our stand** and go into a draw for great prizes!

For more information go to the Feilding A, I & P Association Equine Expo Facebook page.