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# EQUINE NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2008

## Staff News:

**Joe Mackinder** completed the BEVA Advanced Dentistry Course last week held at Edinburgh Vet School run by several of the world's leading equine dentistry vets.

When Joe returns from Australia he hopes to start increasing the level of dental techniques we offer including standing extractions, and diastema burring to stop gum disease, reducing the need for referrals. The course also covered more advanced techniques for diagnosis and treatment of sinus diseases for some of those horses with chronic runny noses!

Everyone at Dalehead wishes Joe and Helen the best of luck in Australia and look forward to their return in April 2009.



## Equine Website:

Our website is currently under re-development to make it more user-friendly and informative. We would appreciate any feedback on our current site so that we can add any features or improvements which you feel would benefit you as a client. Please contact Kate at the surgery either by email at [info@daleheadvetgroup.co.uk](mailto:info@daleheadvetgroup.co.uk) or by telephone on **01729 823538**.

## Autumn Client Talk:

Dalehead are planning another equine client talk to be held in October. We are envisaging having two speakers: **Rachael Conwell** our visiting medicine specialist discussing one of her areas of interest and one of the Dalehead Equine Vets, again subject to be decided. More details will be given in forthcoming newsletters but if you have any suggested topics please contact Kate at the surgery as above.

## Emergency Out of Hours Number: **01729 892030**

Please note: Office opening hours are 8.30am - 5.30pm Mon - Fri and 9am - 12pm on Sat, all routine enquires should be made during these hours. For emergencies outside office hours when urgent veterinary attention is required please use the telephone number above. We recommend you keep this number in a safe place.

## Topic of the month: Azoturia (tying up, exertional myopathy, Rhabdomyolysis)

In its mild form, this is a relatively common condition which affects the muscles of the horse's hindquarters and back. Damage and inflammation of these muscles causes pain and stiffness. Azoturia is still often seen in horses on high diets after a rest from their normal exercise routine. In some individuals which appear to be particularly susceptible, notably young fillies, even a reduction in exercise for one day can result in the horse becoming tied up on resumption of normal exercise.



### What are the symptoms?

Mild cases of azoturia just appear 'stiff-backed' or 'stiff-behind' after exercise. Usually both sides of the body are affected equally so the horse does not actually appear lame. In more severe cases the horse may be very reluctant to move and show signs of pain such as sweating and scraping the ground.



### What should I do?

If you suspect that your horse is tied up, stop exercise immediately and dismount. Sometimes a rider can detect very early signs by a change in action and this should not be ignored. If the horse can walk, return him to his stable. Do not keep him walking if he is reluctant to do so as this may worsen the muscle damage. If he is very stiff and unable to walk, get a horsebox or trailer to transport him to his stable. Moderate to severe cases should be seen by a veterinary surgeon as soon as possible. Initial treatment consists of anti-inflammatory medication and rest. Very mild cases sometimes respond quickly to tranquilisation. Severe cases may require intravenous fluids and intensive supportive treatment. Your vet will collect a blood sample to measure muscle enzymes to confirm the diagnosis and to determine the severity of the muscle damage.

### Why do horses get azoturia?

This is a very complex condition and one which is not completely understood. In some cases it appears to be due to excess energy intake relative to the amount of exercise being received. In other cases electrolyte (salts) imbalances are suspected in the blood.

### How can i prevent azoturia?

Ensure that your horse's diet is providing him with the right amounts of energy, protein, vitamins and minerals for the job you are asking him to do. A pony being hacked out at weekends should not be fed the same diet as an eventer in full work! On 'easy' days reduce the amount of feed you give your horse to reflect the reduction in exercise. If possible, ensure your horse gets some exercise every day, even if this is being turned out or lunging.



If your horse has been tied up it is important to give the muscles time to recover, this can be monitored using blood tests. A gradual return to exercise after recovery is recommended so that there is no sudden increase to trigger another episode of the condition.