



EQUINE NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2008

Staff News

Leanne is going to spend two days in February at the Leahurst Equine Hospital seeing practice.

The University of Liverpool's Philip Leverhulme Equine Hospital at Leahurst is one of the busiest equine referral centres in the country seeing over 2000 cases per year. These cases range from routine referrals for the investigation of lameness and head-shaking etc, to emergency referrals for colic surgery.



Client talk

Just a reminder about our client talk with on Wednesday 13th February at 7.30pm at Giggleswick school with **Professor Derek Knottenbelt OBE BVM&S DVMS DipECEIM MRCVS** talking about equine skin conditions and sarcoids. The informative lecture will give the audience an in depth insight into the subject. Derek is a renowned speaker world wide and has a broad knowledge of equine practice.

All are welcome, entrance is free of charge and a buffet and refreshments are provided. Please ring the surgery to book your seat as soon as possible before Monday 11th February. If you need directions to the venue please contact Kate at the practice or visit our website www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk.



Sweet-itch vaccine

A vaccination for sweet-itch has been under trial for the past three years. The company behind the vaccine is currently compiling trial result data to submit for licensing. Unfortunately the trial has now ended and a licence has not yet been issued, so there is no vaccine available to us in 2008. We hope that a licence will be granted this year to enable commercial vaccine production for 2009. We will let you know when we have more information regarding this product.



Special offer on identichips in February

Throughout February Dalehead are doing identichips for just **£18 plus vat**. The normal price of identichips are **£25 plus vat**.

Microchips are now routinely implanted in registered thoroughbred foals but horses and ponies of any type can benefit from being permanently identified. The microchips are implanted in your horse's neck by means of a simple injection. The microchip carries a unique number which is read by an electric scanner. This number is registered on a national database together with your details as the horse's owner. If your horse is found following theft or loss, you will have an indisputable way of providing that you are the rightful owner. Please contact the surgery to book a visit if you are interested also don't forget, if you pay by cash or credit card at the time for any work done you will receive 10% discount!



Topic of the month: Equine dentistry

Horses have particularly big, strong teeth, much more so in proportion to their size than in humans. This is due to their diets, which cause them to need efficient mastication (chewing) to break the foods up so the digestive juices can process the nutrients and they can be absorbed by the horse.

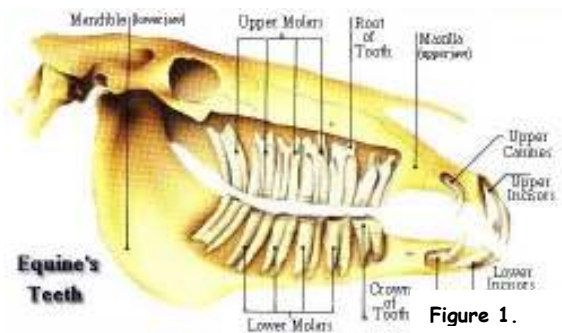


Figure 1.

Domesticated horses need regular dental care to maintain proper chewing and comfort in their mouth. Their upper jaw is larger than the lower which makes the teeth wear on a slant.

Constant grinding of foods can cause the back teeth to become very sharp and irritate the inner cheeks. Also, hooks can form on the front and back of the rows of molars which, if not removed can result in the horse being uncomfortable and sore.

As the teeth wear down throughout the horses life, the pattern can be seen on the surface of the incisors gradually changes, giving a fairly accurate idea of the horse's age. The teeth also become more triangular as a horse gets older, giving another clue to the horses age. (See figure 2)



Figure 2.

The teeth continue to erupt from their sockets throughout the horse's life. The length of the crown in the gum shortens and the roots develop with age, and only a small amount of tooth is left by the time a horse becomes elderly.

What problems can occur with teeth?

Occasionally, a tooth will grow in an abnormal position. This can result in the formation of a diastema or gap between teeth or next to the misplaced tooth. Food material can collect in these places and a severe gingivitis (infection and inflammation of the gums) will develop. In chronic (long-term) cases, the infection can result in damage to the underlying bone. If the lower jaw is involved, an abscess may form within the bone. In the upper jaw these infections can enter the adjacent sinus, resulting in a foul smelling, nasal discharge. In these cases, the face and/or jaw often become swollen.

What can I do to prevent serious tooth problems?

Regular attention to your horse's teeth can help prevent the development of most of the problems discussed above. Healthy, well-maintained teeth will enable your horse to make most efficient use of the feed with which he is supplied and he will therefore thrive.

Nevertheless, tooth fractures can occur at any time, as a result of a kick or fall or biting on hard objects and there are certainly some tooth problems that go undetected until they develop more serious complications, such as sinus infection. If you are in any doubt about the health of your horse's mouth, you should ask your vet to examine your horse.



We will be offering free dental checks throughout February for your horse, with no visit fee if brought into the equine clinic at Rathmell.

N.B. Any sedation or further work required will carry a charge.

