

ST DAVID'S EQUINE

VETERINARY SURGEONS

NEWSLETTER

KEEPING IN TOUCH
SPRING 2015

EQUINE ATYPICAL MYOPATHY

We had a record number of cases of Atypical Myopathy this year. Many horse owners are now aware of the potential dangers associated with the ingestion of sycamore seeds (pictured below) but plenty are still unaware.



The vast majority of cases are seen in the Autumn when the seeds have recently fallen onto pasture. It is advisable to fence off space around sycamore trees in paddocks or to manually rake up fallen seeds if fencing off is

difficult. Whilst some horses seem to appear to be able to ingest multiple seeds without any ill effect other horses can fall sick after consuming only small numbers of the seeds. Unfortunately the survival rate is very low although we are sometimes lucky enough to be able to save those who have mild symptoms which have been caught early. **Initial signs are non specific with affected horses appearing quiet and lethargic but the disease will quickly progress with the horse showing muscle fasciculations (severe trembling), sweating, inappetance and dark coloured urine.** At this stage the horse will soon become recumbent and treatment is usually hopeless as the heart and lungs will start to fail. Whilst there are very few cases occurring over Britain now please remember to be on high alert as soon as seeds start to fall again in the Autumn. Now may be the time to remove sycamore trees from your grazing pasture where possible.

DONALD ATTENBURROW

It is with sadness that we note the passing of Donald Attenburrow, after a very short illness, on 1st January 2015. Many of you will have known him, over the years, as a distinguished equine Veterinary Surgeon at St David's.

Born with a determined, enquiring and inventive mind, after time as a fighter pilot in the Fleet Air Arm in the war, he went on to qualify as a vet and to join the veterinary practice at St David's Hill, Exeter in 1955. It is here that he developed the equine side of the practice and, subsequently, become a pioneer in equine clinical research within veterinary practice. He was the first in the UK to use bone scanning in veterinary work and invented the use of radiotelemetry for investigating respiratory disease in the horse. He formed, alongside Bob Barker, the Langford Farm Equine Hospital at his property in Newton St Cyres which was to become the fore-runner of the current St David's Equine Practice.

We will always remember him.

LEGISLATION GOVERNING DENTAL PROCEDURES

Many people carry out dental examination and treatment in the UK. Some of these are Veterinary Surgeons, some are approved Equine Dental Technicians (BAEDT) who have passed an examination to be approved by DEFRA to carry out some dental procedures and others have no formal training or qualification at all.

Dental procedures have been classified into categories according to who is allowed to perform each procedure. Only Veterinary Surgeons are legally allowed to carry out all procedures.

Category 1 Equine Dental Procedures:

This category contains simple procedures only, which may be carried out by anyone, irrespective of whether they have undertaken any training or have any qualifications.

Category 2 Equine Dental Procedures:

These are additional procedures that can legally be carried out by an approved EDT, with certain restrictions.

- Examination, evaluation and recording of dental abnormalities
- The extraction of teeth or dental fragments with negligible periodontal attachment. **(This only includes teeth that are already very loose and have minimal attachment holding them in place. It does not include teeth that are more firmly attached).**

- The removal of erupted, non-displaced wolf teeth in the upper or lower jaw under direct and continuous veterinary supervision. **(This means that legally a vet must be present if an EDT removes a wolf tooth and must supervise the procedure. Obviously most vets would need to charge for their time).**
- Palliative rasping of fractured and adjacent teeth
- The use of motorised dental instruments where these are used to reduce dental overgrowths and remove sharp enamel points only. **Horses should be sedated unless it is deemed safe to undertake any proposed procedure without sedation, with full informed consent of the owner. (Only Veterinary Surgeons are legally allowed to prescribe and use sedation and pain relief).**

Category 3 procedures include all those involving tissues that are "vascular" (meaning having blood vessels) or innervated (meaning supplied by nerves). These are considered invasive procedures and consequently are restricted by law to be performed by qualified veterinary surgeons ONLY. Among those procedures classed as schedule 3 are widening of diastemata (gaps between teeth) and removal of unerupted or displaced

("blind/unerupted/oblique") wolf teeth. It is ILLEGAL for anyone other than a veterinary surgeon to perform these procedures and the legislation states that should a non-veterinarian illegally carry out a category 3 procedure, **even if under the direction of, or assisting, a veterinary surgeon** then the veterinary surgeon, EDT and owner of the horse are ALL liable for potential prosecution or disciplinary action, should unforeseen complications occur.

As noted above the removal of erupted, non-displaced wolf teeth in the upper or lower jaw must be under direct and continuous veterinary supervision" i.e. the **veterinary surgeon must be present to supervise the entire procedure.**

Prescription Drugs

The legislation also states that it is illegal for anyone other than a veterinary surgeon to dispense, supply or stock prescription only drugs (this includes Sedalin gel, Domosedan Gel or phenylbutazone (bute)). If a non-veterinary surgeon is caught with these drugs in their possession then they are liable to prosecution by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate who govern the use of prescription drugs and actively investigate such incidents.

EQUINE DENTISTRY

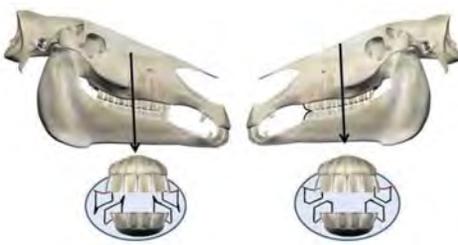
HOW A HORSE'S MOUTH CAN BENEFIT FROM REGULAR SPECIALIST ATTENTION

Dentistry is a rapidly growing area of equine work. This is undoubtedly due to the increase in understanding of the importance of a healthy mouth for the general wellbeing and performance of a horse. A huge amount of research has driven massive improvements in the understanding of how a horse's mouth works and how it can benefit from regular specialist attention.

To enable complete dental examinations and to ensure work is performed thoroughly our vets regularly treat horses under sedation. This enables better visualisation of all teeth and improves the safety for horse, owner and vet, especially when motorised tools are used. It also reduces stress for the horse, making them less likely to be nervous of undergoing such procedures in the future.

We normally recommend that horse's teeth are examined yearly - this is often done at the same time as the vaccination saving the cost of a visit charge. Some horses require dental work every six months, but others will only need attention every couple of years. By regularly checking teeth you will ensure that any minor issues can be dealt with promptly, before more serious problems develop.

Horses' teeth grow continuously, but have a limited amount of hard enamel which needs to be preserved and maintained by ensuring a level grinding surface. Any disruption to the grinding surface, such as an overgrown tooth or a missing tooth, can drastically change the way that a horse chews leading to the development of further problems in the mouth.



But Horses Manage in the Wild Don't They?

People often ask why horses in the wild 'manage' without regular dentistry yet we recommend annual checks for domesticated horses. There are a few reasons for this;

- The top jaw of a horse is wider than the bottom jaw. Horses and ponies in the wild have a very wide excursion (grind) due to the very coarse grass they constantly feed on. This ensures that all edges of the teeth are evenly worn. Horses rarely do this in a domestic setting, even when on a forage only diet, and this creates the formation of sharp points.
- We ride our horses; By putting a noseband on a horse, the delicate soft tissue of the cheek is



pressed onto the sharp points which tend to develop on the outer edges of the upper cheek teeth. This discomfort can lead to head tossing and other evasive behaviours when the horse or pony is ridden. Similarly, if your horse is bitten, the tongue is pushed down onto the sharp points which form on the inside edges of the lower teeth.

- Many horses and ponies in the wild may well have dental issues and as a result, they are likely to live shorter lives than our domestic horses. When horses were prey animals they would be at high risk of predation if they were suffering from dental disease. Most wild horses probably actually die as a result of dental disease as they will eventually struggle to retain the condition they need to survive cold winters.

By maintaining the health of your horse's mouth you can be sure that:

- Your horse will be getting the most from their feed
- Dental issues can be recognised long before the horse starts showing outward clinical signs of dental disease
- Your horse is less likely to show dental pain-associated behaviours when riding (such as head tossing, leaning on one rein, being 'one-sided' or constantly 'mouthing')
- You will save money! (Resolving dental problems once they have become established costs significantly more than annual dental checks!)

Our vets regularly attend courses to enable us to keep on top of the most up to date information and techniques and are experienced in dealing with all types of dental work. Most dentistry, including the use of motorised tools, is performed on the yard for convenience. We also have the facilities to perform more complex work, such as extractions, at the clinic.

A Word of Caution

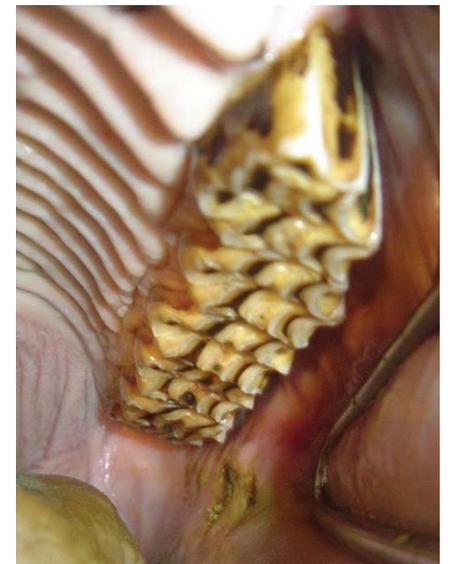
With the availability of powerful motorised equine dentistry tools it is vital that you ensure that the person using them is qualified and insured to do so. Even minor alterations

created in the horse's mouth can result in major changes in the way your horse chews and wears his teeth. It takes just seconds for damage to be done and sometimes this damage is irreparable. Unfortunately, it is very difficult for a horse owner to see into their horse's mouth and therefore the damage done often goes unnoticed. This means it is VITAL that you can rely on the person performing the dentistry and that the work is INSURED. Only veterinary surgeons can legally perform all categories of dental work including extractions, diastema widening, and wolf tooth removal. In addition, it is illegal for anyone other than a vet to prescribe sedatives and pain relief which most dentistry work warrants the use of. It is almost impossible to fully assess a mouth, let alone perform safe, appropriate corrective work, without the use of sedatives so we always advocate the appropriate use of them alongside dental work.

What Can We Do For Your Horse?

All vets at St Davids Equine Practice have a very keen interest in dentistry, regularly attend courses to enable us to keep on top of the most up to date information and techniques and are experienced in dealing with all types of dental work. We regularly perform routine dental examinations, floating and correction out on yards as well as advising on how best to manage long term dental issues. We now have a generator which allows us to treat horses and ponies even if there is no power supply present. At the clinic we have the dental equipment and surgical equipment to allow us to safely perform:

- Bone Scanning (Scintigraphy) and Radiography for diagnosis of difficult or complex dental or sinus issues
- Dental extractions of all teeth (under sedation or General Anaesthesia)
- Removal of retained deciduous teeth (caps)
- Treatment of peri-dental disease
- Diastema widening



ANew RANGE OF SUPPLEMENTS: ST DAVID'S HOOF AID

We have recently started stocking a new range of equine supplements manufactured specifically for veterinary practices by "Hestevard". Their supplements are veterinary formulated to provide the best scientifically based products possible at the best possible price. Because these are sold to us directly, rather than through a veterinary wholesaler, they are very competitively priced. The range includes products for mobility and joint support, gastric ulceration and digestive health and hoof health and growth.



ST DAVIDS HOOF AID

Offers Available:

The focus in the manufacture of St David's Hoof Aid is on providing a very high quality product range with demonstrable efficacy. As a result the manufacturer stands behind their product by guaranteeing that if a client buys and uses 3 pots of Hoof Aid and does not feel that there is a difference in the horn growth or quality in their horse, they will refund the purchase price of the product.

When can it be used?

The supplement is likely to be useful for:

- Horses with poor quality horn or weak, cracked feet
- Horses that fail to grow much horn
- Horses being treated by remedial farriery (where promotion of horn growth is desirable to allow the farrier to produce quicker changes in foot conformation).
- Horses with weak collapsing heel horn
- Horses with impaired microbial gut activity that may as a result be deficient in Biotin (for

example those on antibiotics or those on a high starch diet).

How does it work?

St David's Hoof Aid provides all the nutrients needed by your horse to promote the production of good quality horn (keratin). This supplement should improve the rate of horn growth, the quality of horn produced and result in reduced number of cracks and brittleness of the horn.

The following active ingredients are present in the supplement:

- **BIOTIN.** Biotin is a sulphur containing vitamin which is a necessary component for the synthesis of the keratin which makes up the horn of the hoof. Increased Biotin in the diet has been shown to increase the rate and quality of keratin (horn) produced by the horse. It has also been shown to reduce the incidence of hoof wall brittleness and hoof wall cracks. However biotin alone has been shown to only improve the structure of the outer layer of horn, the stratum externum. **Cracks and defective horn that originates in the deeper structures of the hoof wall are not improved by Biotin supplementation alone.**
- **CALCIUM.** Calcium is responsible for structural cohesion within horn. Calcium supplementation has been shown to improve hoof wall defects that do not respond to Biotin supplementation alone and it is thought that calcium, protein and bioavailable sulphur along with biotin are necessary for the treatment or prevention of hoof wall cracks that originate in the deeper layers of the hoof wall (stratum medium and stratum internum).
- **BIOAVAILABLE SULPHUR, METHIONINE & MSN.** This is an essential mineral in the production of strong hair and horn as it allows the formation of bonds within the keratin structure which give it its durability.
- **ZINC.** To enhance healing of damaged horn and connective tissue.
- **AMINO ACIDS.** Building blocks of proteins including keratin protein.



STAFF CORNER CLAIRE HAWKINS VN J-SQP EQUINE OFFICE MANAGER

I started my training as a Veterinary Nurse in Equine and Mixed Practice up on Dartmoor in 1992, qualifying in 1996. After ten years I decided to move closer to home and joined St Davids Equine Practice in 2002. On a day to day basis I manage the Equine office, this involves answering client queries over the phone, managing the vets calls and diaries, completing insurance claims, sorting out worming plans, helping our Vets and Nurses with diagnostic procedures and caring for our inpatients. Trying to keep all the Vets under control and Tony Kaye out of Darts Farm is very tricky!! Outside work I enjoy caring for and competing my own horse, Buzz at local dressage, show jumping and cross country events & caring for our little black cat Teddy. Ed & I also enjoy watching the Exeter Chiefs play rugby and whizzing around the countryside on Ed's Triumph Tiger 1050 motorbike!

NEW HIGH POWER XRAY GENERATOR INSTALLED AT NUTWELL



We are hugely grateful to Jackie Tye, who has given the practice a donation in memory of her much loved horse, Pilgrim. Jackie wanted us to buy a piece of equipment that would be used regularly to benefit the health of the horses in our area. We have used the donation to buy a new, high power X-ray generator has been installed at the Nutwell Estate main clinic. This generator complements our existing Xray equipment and allows us to produce very high quality Xray images on our clinic based digital xray unit. The high power available also allows us to Xray regions that cannot be imaged by lower power portable machine such as the back. Many thanks to Jackie from the whole clinical team at St David's.

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK



We have just passed a milestone of over 500 likes of our practice Facebook page. The vets and staff regularly update the page with special offers, practice news and interesting cases. We try to keep gory pictures to a minimum but we love sharing stories with happy endings! We hope to see pictures of our clients and their horses out and about in 2015! Please share your photos on our page or email them to us and we will add them for you!

DOES YOUR HORSE OR PONY SUFFER FROM SWEETITCH?

Please take time to fill in the survey found on the link below. This survey is being carried out by Cornwall College (Duchy) and aims to collect data on this distressing disease.

www.surveymonkey.com/s/QTVYSNK

JANIE'S 'POOP IN THE POST' SCHEME SPECIAL OFFERS FOR 2015!

WHY NOT TREAT YOUR HORSE TO A WORM EGG COUNT YEAR PACK?!

The normal total cost of the 3 faecal egg counts that we advise each year would be £36 including VAT (£12 per test). We are offering clients the opportunity of a 10% discount if they buy a years worm egg counts for their horse in advance. The new discounted cost, including VAT, will be £32.40 (a saving of £3.60). For this price you will receive:

- 3 x worm egg count kits with everything you need to collect the samples
- Free postage for the samples
- Text messaged reminders to your mobile to remind you when each test is due throughout the year.

SPECIAL "POOP IN THE POST" DISCOUNTS FOR LIVERY YARDS

- For 4 or more samples from the same yard you receive 10% off each sample
- For 8 or more samples from the same yard you receive 20% off each sample



- Larger yards please contact the practice 01392 876622 ext 2 as further discounts may be available

RECOMMEND A FRIEND!!

Recommend a friend to the poop in the post scheme and you will both receive a 50% discount voucher on your next worm egg count. To qualify for this offer, your friend must not have had a worm egg count test with us within the previous year.

Please contact Janie in the Equine office to take full advantage of these offers.

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL HELEN BROOKS AND HER HORSE PIP



I bought eight year old Pip from a riding centre. He'd had a bit of a rough ride; his previous owner having to give him away through personal circumstances, and he looked a little bewildered in his small dark stable. But after three visits to try him – all in driving rain, winds and a hailstorm, which he took in his stride – I brought him home. His fantastic temperament, gentle nature and willingness to please, had won me over.

His first dental inspection revealed really sharp teeth and ulcers. But subsequent checks showed that his frequent quidding and slow eating, was far from just a few sharp teeth. Pip had multiple diastemas, a wave mouth and a slight incisor 'smile'. Food was packing into the gaps, causing pain and possible infection and decay. By his breed and type, Pip is naturally a slim horse, but he was losing condition through his reluctance to eat.

After flushing out Pip's mouth to remove impacted food, Tony advised that he should remove a large tooth, and then plug some of the gaps with dental impression material, and some further rasping.

Pip spent 3 days at St David's and when home again, the change in him was immediate.

He tucked into his hay, which he had started to avoid, ate all his feed, and as I write, no half chewed nuts on the floor. He has put on weight and condition. His stoic nature meant that he'd never shown real signs of pain, but if anything, he's now chirpier than ever, and an absolute pleasure to own.

Pip will always need special attention to his teeth – he may even need permanent implants! But this lovely, personable horse now enjoys a much more comfortable life – all thanks to Tony and his teams' great care.

Thank you to everyone at St David's.

PHEROMONES A NEW APPROACH TO TREATING EQUINE STRESS

Ceva is a pharmaceuticals company that has produced successful pheromone treatments for stress related behavior in cats and dogs for over 10 years. They have now extended their product range to include "equine appeasing pheromone" in a new product called "Confidence EQ". The aim of this product is the treatment of stress in horses of all ages by giving them a pheromone signal to relax and be calm.



What is a Pheromone?

A pheromone is a natural chemical substance produced by an animal which affects the behaviour of other animals of its species. They are used for communication between animals of a species. The presence of a certain pheromone will have an automatic and predictable effect on all individuals of the same species which is not dependent on age or sex. In horses, pheromones are secreted through sweat glands, sebaceous glands and the urine and detected by the vomeronasal organ which is located near the nostrils. To help pheromones reach the vomeronasal organ horses may perform a special movement called the Flehmen response (raising and curling the top lip and often raising the head). This is a very specific

biological response and is different from smelling.

Horses use different kinds of pheromones to communicate and to convey many different types of information including: Social rank, territory boundaries, recognition of other horses, signalling an alarm, sexual cycle, provide reassurance.

What is Equine Appeasing Pheromone?

Nursing mares, like many mammals, naturally produce an appeasing pheromone which provides reassurance to their new foal. This pheromone helps the foal feel safe, secure and more confident when encountering new situations and unknown environments, helping them learn about the world around them. ConfidenceEQ® is an exact copy of this equine appeasing pheromone. Since the equine appeasing pheromone was identified, numerous studies have been conducted confirming its efficacy in controlling stress in commonly encountered situations in horses of all ages.

When might Confidence EQ be useful

Confidence EQ can be used when you anticipate your horse will be exposed to a new, stressful situation. In this case, using the product alongside the appropriate training will help ensure they have a positive experience. If a problem has already been established, Confidence EQ may be helpful in resolving it, again alongside appropriate corrective training. Specific stressful situations where the product may be useful include loading and travelling, changes of yard or owner, changes in social situation such as weaning of foals or mixing new groups of horses together, competition, breaking and schooling or farriery visits.