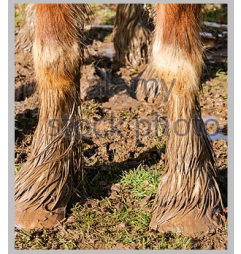


Some things to think about in the coming months:, as we transition from winter to spring....

- **Muddy fields** are near impossible to avoid in our climate. Feet stuck or slipping in mud can lead to **strain & stress** to joints, muscles, tendons and ligaments, and of course a horse may skid into obstacles or fall awkwardly. Take the time to check & clean your horse carefully each day, as many of the problems caused by mud may not be obvious, especially under thick winter coats, feathers, or caked-on mud! Mud can **cause feet to soften** and be more prone to injuries, splaying of the hoof wall, & abscesses. And we all know the challenge of pastern dermatitis or "**mud fever**".... Soft, cracked skin on the lower leg can lead to **cellulitis** - infection & swelling - which can rapidly spread up the entire leg, and requires medication.



- **Fresh spring grass** is irresistible to our equine friends... But it a potential cause of **colic & laminitis** if too much is consumed, so it is wise to restrict access when you see it appearing in your fields. Young grass is low in fibre and high in non-structural carbohydrates, which can only be broken down in the horse's hindgut. When the hindgut bacteria is unaccustomed to these sugars after months of a winter diet, **the bacterial population can become disrupted**, which in turn can cause colic and/or laminitis. As always, changes to your horse's diet should be made gradually, and access to fresh spring grass should be very slowly increased over several weeks. In addition, keep in mind that if a "good doer" horse or pony develops laminitis after eating lush pastures or concentrates, they may have **Equine Metabolic Syndrome**, which means they do not metabolise the sugars properly due to insulin resistance. This condition can be diagnosed by doing an oral sugar test and blood sample.



- **Foal/Breeding season** is just around the corner. Please turn the page for more information about what to expect when you have a **newborn foal** in your care. Hopefully you were able to join us on Feb 5th for Stephen Bradley's very informative client evening on Broodmare Management!

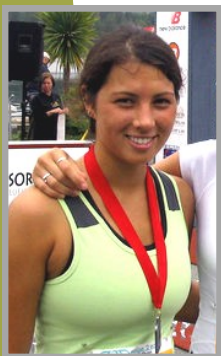
Some news from our busy vets:

Lesley Barwise-Munro was recently invited to teach at the **Student Equine Veterinary Association (SEVA)** annual congress at the University of Liverpool, where she shared her knowledge on lameness examinations with a whopping 170 student delegates! It was a tremendously enjoyable weekend for all participants, and a real honour to have one of our vets involved in the education of so many future equine veterinarians.



Jessica Lin has been training for the **2018 Edinburgh Marathon** this May, with a goal to raise at least £1000 for charity. Macmillan Cancer Support provides all kinds of support to individuals and families whose lives are affected by cancer. It is tough to head out for a run after a long day at work (especially in the cold, dark, wet/icy weather!), but Jess says that "training for and running a marathon is a walk in the park compared to the fight that cancer patients and their families have to go through each and every day."

If you would like to support her fundraising efforts, go to www.justgiving.com/fundraising/jessica-lin or feel free to drop off donations into the clinic reception. There is no donation too small - it all adds up!



Client Evenings:

Last month Edward Chinn discussed the latest in Advanced Equine Dentistry, and on Feb 5th Stephen Bradley discussed all aspects of Broodmare Management.

Please join us on **Monday April 9th** at **Fairmoor Equine Clinic** for the last of our current client evening series. It starts at 6pm, with tea and coffee provided.

April 9th: Causes of Poor Performance and Current Treatment Options
with Lesley Barwise-Munro



Foal season will soon be upon us...

The arrival of a new foal is an exciting time. Most foalings occur uneventfully overnight and the new bundle of joy is a nice surprise found the next morning! Not all foals however, take to "life on the outside" as smoothly as others, so we thought we'd go over some of the main features and milestones of the newborn foal, so that you know what to look out for in your new arrival. *Please note that these are general guidelines, and there will be some variability between individuals, and between breeds to some extent.*



The first few hours of life:

- *Within seconds/minutes:* the foal should right itself, and **sit in sternal** (sitting upright, on its chest, with legs folded)
- *Within 15-30 minutes:* the foal should be alert and have a **suck reflex** present (some will even make suckling motions into their surrounds, while still lying down!)
- *By 30 minutes:* the foal should place its front legs forward and make **attempts to stand**. This will be an ungraceful process, but so long as the foal is trying, that is what counts!
- *By 1 hour:* most foals will have successfully stood and started to **search for the mare's udder** under her belly.
- *By 2 hours:* the foal should **successfully nurse** from the mare.

A normal foal will stand with its legs quite wide apart, and be somewhat hyper-reactive. It is normal for a foal to be difficult to catch, as it will naturally avoid humans and seek its mother when disturbed.

What goes in.....

Healthy foals will nurse 5-7 times per hour, and drink about 15% of their body weight within the first 24hrs. This increases to 20-25% within a few days. In other words, a foal can and should be nursing a lot! **It is absolutely essential that a foal ingests adequate colostrum (the first milk) within 2-3 hours of birth.** This special first milk contains vital nutrition including antibodies (immune protection) to all sorts of pathogens and diseases that the foal will be exposed to, before it can produce those antibodies on its own. This is called "passive immunity", and is vitally important for the foal because it doesn't receive antibodies from the mare through the placenta. The antibody content of the colostrum can be maximised by ensuring that **the mare receives a Flu/Tetanus booster** within the final 4-6 weeks of pregnancy. The mare should also receive a series of **EHV vaccines** in her 5th, 7th, and 9th months of pregnancy.

...must come out!

The **meconium** (first manure) should be passed within the first few hours, and will be dark in colour. Once it has passed, the foal will produce yellow milk faeces. The first **urination** will occur around 6 hours after birth in colts, and about 10-12 hours for fillies. Normal foals will produce large volumes of very dilute urine, and will generally urinate every time they stand to nurse. Ensure that the urine is coming from where it is supposed to - some foals can have an abnormality in which they urinate from their umbilicus. The **umbilical stump** should shrivel up over the first 48hrs, and become a small, dry, non-painful stump. When first born, the umbilical stump can be gently cleaned with hibiscrub, and this can be repeated every few hours for the first day.

Keep in mind that as a prey species, foals have evolved to **show minimal signs of weakness**. Signs of illness are therefore often subtle, and not noticed until the foal is actually very sick. If you are at all concerned or think your foal is not quite right, it is important to act quickly and early to ensure the best chance of successful treatment.

We recommend that all foals be examined by a vet within 24hrs of birth, even if they appear totally healthy. At this time we can take a blood sample to check whether or not your foal has received adequate levels of antibodies from the colostrum, give the foal Tetanus Antitoxin, and do various other checks on the foal (and mare) which are beyond the scope of listing in this article.

We continue to run our excellent value Friday Dental Promotion

This applies to horses brought to our Fairmoor Equine Clinic (Morpeth) for a Routine Veterinary Dental Exam every Friday.

Pre-booking necessary.

**Routine Dental Examination
with Sedation—£68.00,
without Sedation—£52.50**

Call the Clinic to book your horse's dental now on
01670 897597

Service Promotion:

Castration Special - Due to continuing high demand we are extending our offer on colt castrations again, at the extremely competitive price of **£89 incl. VAT** including the drugs for sedation. Please note that a visit fee also applies for colts that are NOT brought into the Fairmoor Equine Clinic.

**FOLLOW
US ON**

