



EQUINE NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2009



A REMINDER TO THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS

The Australian Stud Book requires all 2008 foals to be freeze-branded in time for their brands to be visible as white hairs by the 31st March 2009.

We recommend to brand early to ensure this deadline is met.

Foals must have DNA taken, be micro-chipped and ID paperwork returned within 2 months of receiving your ASB paperwork.

Branding and microchipping cannot be performed on the same day, as per ASB ruling.

This ensures correct identification and accurate recording of brands.

2008-2009 BREEDING SEASON WRAP-UP

A VETERINARY PERSPECTIVE...

The following observations were reported far and wide with increased frequency this breeding season;

1. Early in the season, many mares went over their due dates by 4-5 weeks. Of these, most went on to receive treatment for retained foetal membranes.
2. Mares demonstrated 'spring heat' for a longer period of time—of those without treatment, many continued this behaviour into November. Not good for those chasing early foals!
3. Many mares simply did not respond to prostaglandin, when being used to bring them into season.
4. More anovulatory follicles were observed, particularly frustrating when dealing with frozen semen.
5. Many mares ignored ovulating agents, irrespective of which drug was used.
6. Many mares did not demonstrate accurate teasing behaviour.

Ultimately results were very good, however many of these were achieved at the expense of a few more 'grey hairs' and sleepless nights than normal!

AUTUMN REMINDERS

- ♦ **Roughage**—Due to the continued drought conditions, roughage in paddocks is becoming scarce. It is essential to maintain a diet with adequate roughage, which is easily achieved by feeding free choice hay. This reduces the risk of stomach ulcers, colic and assists in maintaining healthy teeth and general wellbeing.
- ♦ **Foals**—we recommend to wait 2-3 weeks after weaning to begin deworming. Foals traditionally have large worm burdens, and the additional stress of weaning increased the risk of colic. Foals should receive their first vaccinations for tetanus, strangles, herpes virus and salmonella vaccines from 12 weeks of age
- ♦ **Pregnant mares**—Don't forget to vaccinate your ladies in waiting also. Their first herpes virus vaccine booster is due at 5 months gestation. They can also begin a salmonella and rotavirus vaccine program.
- ♦ **Coming into the cooler and wetter (!) months**, paddock rotation should be extended by an additional 2-4 weeks to ensure adequate time for worm larval death, to minimize reinfection when grazing.

TATURA AND CAMPASPE VETERINARY CLINICS

Please contact Amber, Cindy or Clare to discuss any of your horse concerns.

29 ROSS STREET, TATURA, VICTORIA 3616

PH: 03 5824 1755 FAX: 03 5824 1586

www.tatvet.com.au

EQUINE WELCOMES JESS

Jess is a familiar face from around the clinic, working in reception and accounting. We are all excited that she has joined the equine team fulltime, as a large animal veterinary nurse.

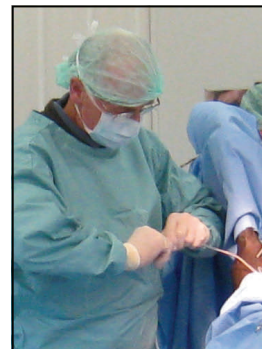


RECENT SURGERY DAY WITH DR ALASTAIR MACLEAN

Dr Alastair MacLean once again joined us for a day of surgical cases, and we were kept very busy with a total of 10 surgeries being performed. Our patients included several cryptorchids, coming from all over the state, as well as racehorses requiring arthroscopy. Alastair also utilized our video endoscope equipment, to the benefit of one of the many visiting veterinary students.

With the use of a padded recovery room, and modern anaesthetic drugs, all horses presented with a low anaesthetic risk, and went on to have smooth recoveries, allowing us to send them home quickly.

Our equine veterinarians are in regular correspondence with Dr MacLean, a specialist equine surgeon based in Melbourne. Any challenging surgical cases are referred and discussed, enabling us to give you the best advice and access to the most up-to-date treatment options available.



IN FOCUS—EQUINE CUSHINGS DISEASE

Equine Cushings Disease is an illness seen in our older horse and pony population. Unfortunately for many of them, the disease is not recognized and thus treatment not sought, as traditionally the signs have been explained away as 'old age'.

WHAT IS CUSHINGS DISEASE?

Ponies with Cushings have a benign tumour on the pituitary gland in their brain. This tumour indirectly stimulates the overproduction of the hormone cortisol. Cortisol is vital for helping the body to deal with stress, but in excessive levels, it causes a vast array of problems.

CLINICAL SIGNS

At Tatura Vet Clinic, we have seen an increased number of cases over the summer months. Owners often first become concerned when their ponies don't shed their long, shaggy, winter coats, despite endless hours of brushing! Other clinical signs include lethargy, excessive drinking, loss of topline muscle and weight loss despite extra feeding.

Due to the excess cortisol in their system, horses with Cushings have a depressed immune system, making them more susceptible to infections and other illnesses. Sadly, they also often suffer from chronic laminitis.

DIAGNOSIS

The diagnosis of Cushings Disease is often made based on clinical signs alone. Specific blood tests can be performed to confirm our suspicions, based upon measuring baseline cortisol levels and then attempting to suppress cortisol levels.



A typical 'Cushings Pony' with excessively hairy coat.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Medication is available on prescription to treat Equine Cushings Disease, however medication is only one facet to consider. Special attention should be paid to general health and well-being, in particular dental and farrier care, regular deworming and vaccination, and supplementary feeding, mindful of the higher risk of laminitis. We recommend ponies with thick coats are clipped throughout the summer months, especially given our record-breaking heat waves. Herbal supplementation of chasteberry and immune stimulants can be beneficial to improving overall health and wellbeing.

If you have any concerns about your horse or pony in relation to Cushings Disease, please make an appointment for a consultation with one of our equine vets.