



EQUINE NEWSLETTER

Winter 2009



CLINIC NEWS

The equine team are all enjoying some well deserved recovery time after a successful stud season.

The interesting activities continue at the clinic, such as our recent gastroscopy day with Ranvet, and yet another surgery day with Dr Alastair MacLean.

Winter is 'Equine Conference Season' – this is another of the activities occupying our equine vets throughout the next few months.

Our radio show 'Vet Talk' on 95.3 SR FM has had some horse influence. Tune in on Wednesdays from 11am.

We also continue to vet at both the Echuca Harness Racing and the Tatura & Shepparton Racing Club meets – please come and say hello if you see us around!

WINTER WARMERS...

- Feeding – During the cold months, our horses energy requirements increase, and despite the green tinge in the paddocks, this early winter grass is low in nutrients. Many horses (particularly growing horses and geriatrics) will benefit from an increase in the energy and fat ration in their feed.
- Water Intake – A reminder to monitor water intake throughout the colder months, as reduced water intake is a high risk factor predisposing to colic. Often automatic troughs and outside troughs and pipes can freeze over. Older horses suffering from tooth problems can be at particular risk, as they may experience dental pain when drinking cold water, making them reluctant to drink. Also note that channel levels will be dropped until October.
- Worming – Winter is the best time to treat for bots, as bot flies have been active throughout autumn. We also recommend treating for tapeworm.
- Spelling – as our performance horses go out over winter, now is an ideal time to perform routine dental floats.

IN-HOUSE BLOOD TESTING

A reminder that we offer in-house blood testing at Tatura Vet Clinic.

Our laboratory equipment enables us to perform haematology, biochemistry, and electrolyte analysis.

This allows us to gain vital diagnostic information quickly, and monitor cases to assess their progression, which assists us in initiating the best treatment plans and making case decisions early.

We also offer a discounted price on routine 'Equine Racing Profiles'.

Pre-race bloods are beneficial as they allow us to monitor performance and recovery, enabling trainers to individually tailor their exercise and feed program based on their horses' response to normal training stresses.

Bloods can be collected during your veterinary visit, and we also regularly perform testing on samples dropped into the Tatura Vet Clinic.

TATURA AND CAMPASPE VETERINARY CLINICS

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

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If you would like to receive your newsletter and other correspondence by email, please contact the clinic with details.

LICE—A BUGGY REMINDER

Lice are very common during the cooler months, when thick coats and winter rugs provide an ideal breeding environment for these biting insects.

Signs of lice infestation include itching and rubbing, and the tell-tale 'crawling coat'. Minor lice infestations can be difficult to detect, particularly as lice will move away from direct sunlight, so it is best to check for eggs in the evening, particularly at the roots of the mane and tail.



Lice'N'Simple is a highly effective product, which targets both immature and mature lice. Being a pour-on product, there is no need for body washing or messy powders.

Lice'N'Simple is available at the Tatura Vet Clinic for \$29.75, and one bottle will treat two average 500kg horses.

IN MEMORANDUM

Following the recent passing of a beloved pony, his family has generously made a donation to our equine department.

We look forward to purchasing a special piece of equipment to benefit ponies in the future.



IN FOCUS—GREASY HEEL (MUD FEVER)

Coming into the wetter months, many owners of horses with white legs will be starting to panic at the thought of possible impending greasy heel. And with good reason—greasy heel is a painful condition for both horses and owners! With so many different topical lotions and potions available, how do we decide what treatment to use?

WHAT EXACTLY IS GREASY HEEL?

Greasy heel is an extremely painful dermatitis affecting the skin of the lower legs, in particular those with white markings. There is no specific cause of greasy heel, however it is more common during the winter months, when heavy feathers and constant wetting of the skin permits bacterial infection.

CLINICAL SIGNS

Many of us are familiar with the angry looking scabs that develop on white legs. Early in the disease, these crusting scabs may be limited to a small area behind the pastern, and when removed, reveal reddened, ulcerated wounds. As greasy heel spreads, it extends up the cannon and can involve most of the lower leg.

In severe cases, the limbs become swollen and the horse is often lame, and can become systemically unwell.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

We recommend removing horses from wet, muddy paddocks, and keeping the legs as dry as possible. Clipping of the legs may be necessary.

There are a vast array of topical ointments available—ranging from antibiotic creams, cortisone based creams, zinc based creams and natural (herbal, honey) creams.

We have had much success with our 'Tatura Skin Shield Cream', which is a zinc based ointment and can be purchased over the counter unlike the commonly requested prescription-only Prednoderim.

There is some contention about whether to forcibly remove the scabs, or leave them be. In our experience, it is best to allow the scabs to soften using a topical treatment over several days, so that they are readily removed without causing further trauma and bleeding, and upsetting the horse.

Topical treatment should be continued until the underlying skin has healed.

Unfortunately some horses suffer from recurrent, chronic greasy heel, and often it is a case of trialing several different products to find one which gives best results.

In severe cases, prescription medication may be necessary to treat any associated infection. There are several more complex diseases that can mimic greasy heel, so if you are concerned about non-responsive greasy heel, please make an appointment for a consultation with one of our equine vets.

TATURA SKIN SHIELD CREAM
250ml \$34.00 / 500ml \$55.00

