



HAWKESBURY EQUINE VETERINARY CENTRE



CHRISTMAS 2016 NEWSLETTER

The Vets and Staff at HEVC would like to wish all their patients and their owners a Happy and Healthy Festive Season.

Summer has arrived early with some very hot and dry conditions. With the hot weather come and flies and mosquitos. If your horse is known to suffer from the "itch" we recommend you start preventative care now BEFORE they start itching. Preventative measures include rugging and long acting back-line insecticides. If your horse suffers

from the itch, please call one of our friendly reception staff for more information on how to help your horse.

Just a reminder to all our clients, it is illegal for the office staff to dispense S4 medications for horses that are not on our records and not under the direct care of one of our vets. Please understand that you will be refused if you require medications not prescribed to you.

SPOT LIGHT ON EYE ULCERS

Recently the vets have seen an increased incidence in eye ulcers. All eye ulcers should be assessed by a vet without delay.

Whilst most eye ulcers and scratches will heal uneventfully, some can become infected. A small ulcer can turn into a melting ulcer that ruptures within 12-24 hours !

An infected eye ulcer can quickly threaten your horse's vision and if not treated quickly and aggressively horses can loose their vision and even require eye removal.

Treatment options usually include the placement of a sub-palpebral lavage and eye treatments every 2 hours. Surgery can also be performed in select cases to perform a "conjunctival graft" which is a where we graft a section of the horses conjunctiva (eye lid) to the affected cornea to bring blood supply to the area.



Pic above is from one of our recent cases of a "melting" ulcer which was successfully treated and his eye was saved. The horse has full vision although will always have a scar at the site of the ulcer.

POP QUIZ



What might be the cause of these non-healing granulating wounds near the horse's eye?

How do we diagnose the cause of the wounds?

What are the treatment options for this horse?

HEVC sends out quarterly newsletters. To receive these by email please call the office on (02) 4577 4611 or check our facebook page.

POP QUIZ ANSWERS

These non-healing wounds are often known as “Summer sores” but the proper name for the disease is Habronemiasis.

Habronemiasis is a relatively common condition seen during the summer months caused by nematode (worm) infestation of the skin and typically manifests as granulomatous erosions and/or masses. The most commonly affected sites include the eyelids and conjunctiva around the eyes, legs, penis, preputial sheath and any open skin wounds.

How do horses get infected?



The common house and stable flies are intermediate hosts for these parasites, meaning that they ingest and harbor the immature larval stages and then deposit them into the skin while biting. The larvae are occasionally deposited around the muzzle, thereby facilitating ingestion by the horse. Adult stages of the nematode live in the stomach and produce larvae which are subsequently passed in manure. The life cycle is repeated when the larvae in the manure are ingested by maggots (immature flies).

How is it diagnosed?

A presumptive diagnosis is usually made on clinical appearance and behaviour of the lesions. A Biopsy would be needed to definitively diagnose the disease.

How is it treated?

There are 4 strategies for treating habronemas; 1. Ivermectin oral dewormer 2 doses 14 days apart; 2. Topical +/- systemic corticosteroid treatment; 3. Fly control and 4. Topical wound care to prevent re-infestation. 5. More extensive lesions may require surgical intervention.

CASE OF THE MONTH - A CHOKING HORSE



One evening after feed-up time one of our vets Dr Kylie Hardwicke was called to a horse that was not interested in food and had green discharge coming out of her nostrils. On Examination it became apparent that the horse had a severe case of choke (oesophageal obstruction). Unlike when people choke on food, which it is due to food getting stuck in our trachea that can stop us from

being able to breath. When horses choke it is actually the food just stuck in their oesophagus. This means they can still breathe normally. For this reason, choke is not immediately life threatening. However, if the horse is not treated or the choke is not resolved, horses can die from not being able to eat or drink.

Many horses are able to clear the choke by themselves and by the time a vet arrives the horse may be normal again. In this particular case, the material in the oesophagus of this horse was firmly wedged. After initial attempts to dislodge the foreign material in the field were unsuccessful, the horse was brought into hospital for further evaluation. A scope was placed down the oesophagus to determine the identity of the foreign material. It actually turned out to be a pine tree branch with food trapped around it. After approx. 2 hours Dr Hardwicke was able to extract parts of the branch out using the scope and the remaining section was flushed down the oesophagus into the stomach. The horse made a full recovery and has had no further episodes of choke.

HOW CAN YOU TELL IF YOUR HORSE HAS CHOKE? Horses that are choking will not be able to swallow food or water. They will frequently drool saliva or saliva mixed with feed from their mouth and/or nostrils. If horses attempt to drink, water will run out of the nostrils and the horse will cough. Horses will often extend their heads or necks repeatedly in an effort to swallow.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOUR HORSE HAS CHOKE? If you suspect your horse is choking, you should call a vet. Horses that choke can easily become dehydrated and suffer from electrolyte imbalances. However, you should not let your horse attempt to eat or drink until a veterinarian has examined the horse. A veterinarian will confirm the horse is choking by conducting a physical exam and attempting to pass a tube from the nostril to the stomach.

HOW CAN YOU PREVENT CHOKE? The primary cause of choke is that feed material was not properly chewed (ground) prior to swallowing. Therefore, the most important method to avoid choke is proper dental care. The other main cause of choke is aggressive (rapid) intake of feed. To slow down the aggressive eater, feed should be provided in large, shallow feeders. This will help prevent horses from getting big mouthfuls of feed. Large stones or salt blocks can also be placed in the feeder to force horses to nibble around the stones to take in their feed slowly rather than taking large bites.