



AUTUMN 2020 NEWSLETTER

2020 has been a trying time for all of us in the Hawkesbury Region. We battled through the bush fires, floods and now social isolation due to COVID-19. Rest assured we are going nowhere and will continue to provide veterinary care for your animals in every way we can, however, we do seek your support and understanding in relation to our Covid-19 Protocol.

With the rain after a prolonged dry spell our vets are currently getting an increased number of calls for foot abscesses, habronemas, (summer sores), colics and laminitis cases. Remember to keep on top of your fly prevention and dietary management of the chronically laminitic patients!

OUR FIRST OPEN DAY WAS A HUGE SUCCESS!

Held on Saturday 14th March, 2020, our Open Day was a fun, informative day with talks, demonstrations, trade stalls and giveaways. We would like to thank John from Randlab, Natalie from Ceva, Katherine from Boehringer-Ingelheim, Dr Philippa from Kohnkes Own, Bethanie from Prydes, Dave & Elwyn from Hidez, Thomas from Pet Plan, Joan from TAFE NSW, Ros from The Resplendent Rider, Robyn from The Horse Stall, Sean from Dunbars Run Alpacas, Phil from EQ Saddleworld, Monika from Living Horse Tails, Tim from Acacias Catering and Lypards for supporting this event. We look forward to seeing you all again next year!



COVID 19 Protocol

Our Practice is still open for business as we are classified as an essential service. We have however, implemented extra protective measures to keep our staff and clients safe. We have divided up our vets to ensure we can continue to provide routine ambulatory service, afterhours service and hospital care during this crisis. We are screening all bookings to ensure you are not in a high risk category and request only one person at the time of the consult. If necessary, we can arrange to take a vet nurse with the vet to hold your horse and improve social distancing. Our office is open and extra hygiene measures are in place. We ask you to stop, remain outside and ring the office to allow staff to safely arrange for your needs. This will also apply to clinic calls, hospital admissions and visits. We will instruct you how to enter the clinic and minimise the contact. We hope these new precautions will keep us all safer and allow us to continue to provide our professional veterinary service. Thank you for your understanding during these difficult times and we will continue to keep you informed of any updates.

POP QUIZ



The above picture is of someone feeling which pulse on their horse?

If there is an elevation in how easily this pulse is felt what could that mean for your horse?

What are some differentials for a horse with an increase to this pulse?

See over for answers and more →

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

ANSWERS TO POP QUIZ: The picture shown in the pop quiz is of someone checking their horses **DIGITAL** pulse. An increased digital pulse indicates **inflammation to the horses lower limb** especially the foot. An increased digital pulse can occur with many diseases and can be as innocent as a stone bruise or thrush or could indicate other diseases such as a foot abscess, laminitis or even a fractured pedal bone. With all of the wet weather of late, we have seen an increase in the number of foot abscess. Below is a fact sheet on what a foot abscess is.

FOOT ABSCESSSES

The scenario is all too familiar for many horse owners... yesterday your horse was sound, but today you find him crippled, with no apparent injury! What could have happened? Odds are this horse has a hoof abscess. Sooner or later, nearly all horse owners will encounter this problem. Fortunately, most horses make a full recovery with prompt treatment.

Hoof Abscesses Explained

Hoof abscesses occur when bacteria get trapped between the sensitive laminae (the tissue layer that bonds the hoof capsule to the coffin bone) and the hoof wall or sole. The bacteria create exudate (pus), which builds up and creates pressure behind the hoof wall or sole. This pressure can become extremely painful. Although most commonly seen during the wet winter and spring months, hoof abscesses can plague horses year-round. Moisture in the environment can soften regions of the foot and make it easier for bacteria to get trapped inside. Extremely dry conditions can cause brittle, cracked feet. The abscess-causing bacteria enter the foot through hoof cracks, by traveling up the white line, through penetrating wounds to the foot and even by "close" horseshoeing nails. Deep bruising might also trigger abscesses.

Diagnosing a Hoof Abscess



While a hoof abscess generally takes several days to develop, most horses don't show any clinical signs until the pressure becomes so great that severe lameness is evident. Often this lameness develops overnight. Changes in blood flow to the hoof cause it to throb, and this can be detected as a more evident digital pulse in the affected lower limb. Palpation of the coronary band (hairline) or heel bulbs sometimes elicits pain. Some hoof abscesses can cause varying degrees of swelling in the lower limbs, but the majority will not. It is important to involve your veterinarian early on in the diagnosis and treatment of this condition because hoof abscesses can mimic other more serious diseases or injuries. Vets usually diagnose a hoof abscess based on history and a

physical examination. Whenever possible your vet will use hoof testers to localize the abscess to a region of the foot. Sometimes he or she might use diagnostic nerve blocks or even radiographs to confirm the diagnosis or to pinpoint the exact location of the abscess.

Treatment

The quickest way to relieve hoof abscess pain is to drain the exudates buildup, which is like popping a large pimple. The growing exudates and pressure of the abscess will try to take the path of least resistance. For some abscesses, this means they will rupture on their own and drain at the coronary band or heel bulbs. Other abscesses will need to be surgically drained by your veterinarian. For a small percentage of abscesses, they will spread deeper into surrounding structures, such as the coffin bone, the navicular bursae, or deep digital flexor tendon sheath. This is particularly true with chronic abscesses in which treatment is delayed. If any of these other structures become affected, the treatment can be prolonged, costly, and could result in unsoundness. In most cases, your veterinarian will create a small hole through the white line, sole, or hoof wall in order to provide a pathway for the exudate to leave the foot. Once drainage is established, your veterinarian will probably apply some type of poultice or bandage to help pull the remaining exudates from the hoof. Depending on where the abscess drains, your vet might recommend keeping the drainage site clean until it has had a chance to dry and harden.



Prevention

Regular hoof care and farriery is an important step in preventing hoof abscesses, but there is no guarantee that your horse will be immune to this problem. While difficult to control, avoiding extremely wet or dry conditions, as well as sudden changes in moisture, can help prevent formation of hoof abscesses. Routine mucking of stables, pens, or other confined areas can also help prevent them.

AAEP Forum article courtesy of "[The Horse](#)" magazine written by Brian W. Fitzgerald, DVM