

Horse Talk

WELCOME to our winter edition of Horse Talk. Autumn seemed to fly by as we were all confined to the home paddock! This month we are talking about gastric ulcers and our upcoming scoping day. We also have a special "Winter WOF" for your equine friends.

Diagnosis and Management of Gastric Ulcers in Horses

Key Points

- ◆ Gastric ulcers affect health, well-being, behavior and performance.
- ◆ The horse's stomach has two parts; an upper squamous part and a lower glandular part. Both parts may develop ulcers.
- ◆ Gastric ulcers affect horses of all breeds, disciplines, all ages and under all management systems. 93% of endurance horses, 87% of Standardbred racehorses, 40-60% of performance horses and 10% of leisure horses
- ◆ A horse's stomach produces acid 24/7, up to 42 litres per day. When the stomach is not full acid can splash onto the vulnerable upper portion called the squamous (nonglandular) mucosa.
- ◆ Less than 10% of ulcers heal spontaneously.
- ◆ The harder your horse works and the longer it is in work, the more likely it is to have gastric ulcers.
- ◆ Gastroscopy is the only definitive way to diagnose gastric ulcers and to monitor the effectiveness of any treatment.



Concerned your horse may have stomach ulcers?

9 & 10 June Gastroscopy day

Town & Country Vet Equine Clinic
Specialist from Randlab

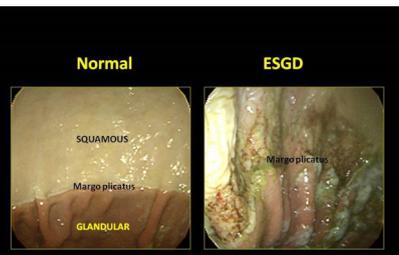
Please contact Laurie at the clinic for information and to book your horse in for scoping

Common signs of gastric ulcers include:

- ◆ Poor appetite
- ◆ Weight loss/ poor body condition/ failure to thrive
- ◆ Behavioural changes eg nervousness, reluctance to work, irritability
- ◆ Dull, harsh coat
- ◆ Reluctance to train, refusing jumps, resisting contact
- ◆ Girthiness, wind sucking, crib-biting.
- ◆ Chronic diarrhoea
- ◆ Colic-usually intermittent, but may be severe

Management Strategies

- ◇ Decrease the number of times per week that the horse works may be useful strategy
- ◇ Horses should have some physical contact with each other in addition to visual contact
- ◇ Ideally horses should have access to roughage—hay or grass 24 /7. Horses are designed to be continuous grazers.
- ◇ The more roughage (hay/grass) in the horse's diet, the less likely the horse is to develop ulcers.
- ◇ It is essential your horse is fed prior to exercise or travel. This includes walking exercise.
- ◇ It is important that the pre-work feed (more than 1.5kg) contains some hay or roughage. Feed in the stomach not only absorbs any free gastric fluid but also forms a physical barrier to acid splash.



View of stomach lining through gastroscop

WINTER WOF

Special "Winter WOF"

Health check
Blood test for Selenium
Faecal egg count
Dental
only at Town & Country Vet Equine Clinic
\$240—a saving of \$51
June and July 2020 only

As we move into winter your horse's oral health becomes even more important. Ensuring your horses teeth and oral health is optimal will ensure your horse gets the most out of every mouthful, meaning less wastage and more energy available to keep them warm.



This is especially important for older horses who tend to be hard to keep condition on over the winter. Now is the time to get an oral health appraisal done and ensure any work that needs doing is done before the cold of winter really bites!

Dentals at Town & Country Vet

Our purpose built Haycock Road facility is the ideal place for dentals -safe and convenient at a discounted rate and no mileage fee.

The horse is examined, using a speculum (gag), a good light, dental mirror and dental probe.

Dental procedures are performed using a combination of the power-float and traditional rasps. This enables a range of treatments from basic dentistry to major extractions or corrective work.

Pain and stress free dentals and extractions are paramount to us as veterinarians. We achieve this by using appropriate sedation, local anaesthetic or nerve blocks as required.



Every "Winter WOF" done this June and July goes into the draw to win a 4.5kg bucket of Platinum Performance Equine minerals valued at \$184

THE IMPORTANCE OF SELENIUM

Selenium is an essential trace element. Together with vitamin E it is a powerful antioxidant protecting cells from damage. Soil in the Nelson / Marlborough region is very low in selenium. The exception is the Delaware Bay, Cable Bay and Todd Valley areas—hence it is vital to check your horses selenium status!

Signs associated with low selenium include poor coat and hoof quality, sore achy muscles, poor performance and poor fertility.

However, just as selenium deficiency is a problem, so is selenium toxicity – supplementing with more is not better! Excess levels of selenium result in weight loss, loss of hair from the mane and tail, and hoof damage. In severe cases the hooves will slough off.



A balance between the two extremes is required. A single blood test will let you know what your horses current selenium status is. Your vet can then use these results to develop an appropriate supplementation programme. An annual blood test will ensure the selenium levels are being maintained within the optimum range.

Be careful what strength liquid selenium you are using. We sell Selmit 1mg, there is also a Selmit 5mg being sold- this is 5 x stronger. Some feeds also contain added selenium which can complicate your selenium supplementation strategy.

(03) 544 1200

24 HOUR
Emergency
SERVICES