

# Equine News: January 2023

## Is your horse or pony the right weight?

Maintaining our horses and ponies at the right body condition and weight can be a real challenge. With changes in the growth and food value of the grass, different batches of hay and haylage and difficulties in maintaining exercise levels at this time of year all providing major challenges.

As our understanding of laminitis and the risk factors increases it has become clear that body condition, diet and exercise all hold vital roles in the prevention of this disease.

We need to challenge the long held belief of what a healthy horse looks like and understand that health lies in lean and well muscled and not the rounded curves of a fat covered the skeleton.

Native ponies in their natural conditions would have significant weight loss over this second half of the winter and at the start of Spring be lean with visible ribs. We need to seek to achieve this weight loss in our native breeds to reduce insulin levels and manage laminitis risk in the Spring months.

The time to act is now:

1. Reduce access to grazing
2. Feed hay soaked for 8-12 hours at 1.5-2% body weight per day (6-8kg unsoaked weight for 400kg pony) Reduce this quantity if grazing.
3. Remove all supplementary feed other than a low calorie balancer.
4. Increase exercise. 30 mins high intensity exercise a day (fast work or schooling) can help with weight management and insulin sensitivity.

Monitor your progress take photos every 2 weeks and compare them. Get your horse weighed regularly to monitor progress, target weight loss is 1% body weight per week.

If you are concerned about your horses weight and laminitis risk please get in touch and look out for our laminitis prevention club coming soon.

## Pre-Season Health Plan Offer January & February

**For £145 (inc VAT), the Pre-Season Health Plan includes:**

- Full examination incorporating lameness and medical review
- Gold standard dental examination and treatment including sedation
- Full blood profile including liver/kidney function
- 3 free worm egg counts and worming reminders
- 10% off vaccinations
- 1 free zone visit

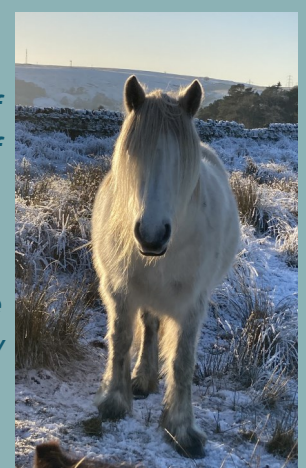


**That's less than half price in comparison with the full cost!**

Offer open to horses and ponies of all ages. Enrolment onto this scheme is open throughout January and February; treatment under the terms of the scheme, i.e. full examination, dental examination and treatment, and full blood profile, must take place in January and February, with the exception of vaccinations. Annual membership fee or renewal must be paid in full prior to the visit.

*Native ponies kept in their natural conditions would lose a significant amount of weight in the second half of the winter.*

*We need to aim to replicate this weight loss and so they start Spring in lean condition with visible ribs.*



## Welcome back to Ivana

We are delighted that vet Ivana will be returning to work later this month following her maternity leave. We know from all the enquiries that everyone will be very pleased to see her back in action!



## Focus on Feet : Part 2

In this second part of our focus on feet we'll look at bruises to the feet. These are a common cause of lameness and sometimes frustrating as the bruise normally isn't visible until long after the lameness has resolved. Bruises can be slow to resolve and can become infected and form abscesses.

### Bruised sole

**Signs:** Moderate to severe lameness, heat in the hoof wall, increased digital pulse, discolouration of an area of the hoof sole.

**Cause:** Direct trauma to hoof sole e.g. hard ground/stepping on a stone

**Diagnosis:** Often based on the clinical signs, hoof testers may assist in identifying the affected area, paring and visualisation of the bruise. Nerve blocks may be necessary to localise the lameness.



**Treatment:** Rest and pain relief. If the sole has been punctured poulticing may be required to prevent an abscess.

**Prevention:** Regular trimming and shoeing where necessary, picking out feet, avoiding hard uneven ground.

### Corn

**Signs:** Mild to moderate usually forelimb lameness; increased digital pulse, heat in the foot, pain on hoof testers at the seat of the corn.

**Cause:** Bruises form due to focal points of pressure, from the heel pressure of a poorly fitted shoe or poor foot conformation.

**Diagnosis:** Pain is seen when pressure is applied to the affected area and paring of the foot will often reveal a corn.

**Treatment:** Relieve pressure, dressing applied, pain relief and box rest.

**Prevention:** Correct hoof balance and shoeing.

## Zone Visits January and February

Zone 1 (NE44, NE46-47, NE49 & DH8) - Mon 9th Jan, Mon 6th Feb

Zone 2 (NE19, NE45 & NE48) - Mon 16th Jan, Mon 13th Feb

Zone 3 (NE1-7, NE12-15, NE18, NE20, NE22-30 & NE61) - Sally -Thurs 5th Jan, Thurs 2nd Feb  
Liz/Steph Mon 23rd Jan, Mon 20th Feb

Zone 4 (NE8-11, NE16-17, NE21, NE31-43) - Mon 30th Jan, Mon 27th Feb

Zone 5 (DH2-7, DH9 & DL13-16) - Tues 31st Jan, Tues 28th Feb

Zone visits offer a reduced price visit of £20 for one owner and £10 for more than one owner at same yard for planned routine veterinary work.

We are able to offer this service by mapping the most efficient route around the calls – therefore it is not possible to specify a time or vet for a zone visit.