



Gillivervet Limited
J.C. Gilliver & Colleagues
Veterinary Surgeons

Gillivervet Autumn Newsletter 2019

Autumn



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Hello & welcome to the Autumn edition of the Gillivervet Newsletter. The Summer seems to have come & gone in a flash but as you'll see in the team news section of this newsletter, in addition to our veterinary duties, we have all been kept rather busy!

In this instalment, we are going to look at potential problems facing us in Autumn including sycamore poisoning, a potentially fatal, devastating disease that has come to the fore in recent years. We also look at the age-old problem of ragwort.

Sadly, the national equine flu outbreak continues & we provide an update on page 3 of this newsletter. Following on from the Summer edition of the newsletter, we also re-cap on the importance of responsible worming which in addition to the judicious use of wormers involves careful pasture management & diagnostic testing.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter & please do let us know if you would like any particular topics covering in the Winter edition.

On behalf of everyone at Gillivervet, we hope you have a fantastic Summer out and about with your horses.

Until next time,

Leona



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Gillivervet Highlights



Team Gillivervet

With show season in full swing, Anne, Charlotte, Christine & Alyssa have all been kept very busy! Team Gillivervet provided veterinary cover at the annual Bold Heath, British Horse Trials Event on August 10th & 11th. Furthermore, the team will be providing veterinary cover at the STARS Northern Champion of Champions on the 18th, 19th & 20th of October at Aintree. We look forward to seeing everyone there!



John's charity bike ride

On June 28th & 29th, John undertook a 160-mile bike ride from London to Amsterdam, in aid of VetPartners chosen charity for 2019, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. In addition to the length of the ride itself, John and his fellow riders had to contend with temperatures in excess of 30 degrees celcius!

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People believes that nobody with deafness should feel alone so they train highly skilled dogs that help deaf people reconnect with life. As importantly, they alert deaf people to life-saving sounds like the smoke alarm and intruder alarm, and other important sounds such as the oven timer and baby monitor.

So far, John has raised £2255 for this wonderful cause and there is still time to donate, if you haven't already, through the following link www.justgiving.com/fundraising/johngilliver2019.

John wishes to thank everyone for their generosity & support.



John judges at the Dublin Horse Show

John recently made the trip across the Irish Sea to judge the Middle-Weight Hunters & Middle-Weight Hunter Championship, Four Year Old, Hunter Mare & Supreme Hunter Championships & Amateur Hunter Sportsman classes at the Dublin (RDS) Horse Show.



A warm welcome to Hannah Birch

We would like to welcome vet Hannah Birch to our Veterinary Surgeon team. Hannah joined us at the beginning of August and has a special interest in stud work. She looks forward to meeting everyone over the forthcoming months.



Baby news!

Vet Leona and husband Andy welcomed their baby girl Lexi in June. Leona has been kept busy writing veterinary articles whilst on maternity and featured in the August edition of Your Horse magazine.



Gillivervet in the spotlight!

Did anyone spot vet Alison on BBC North West Tonight on August 20th with Sonny? We believe Sonny is the last remaining pit pony in the UK & belongs to our long standing client Suzie.

Atypical Myopathy



“ It is a common misconception that the disease always results in death! ”

Atypical Myopathy is a devastating, often fatal, muscle disorder which is generally seen affecting horses in Autumn & Spring. The disease occurs following ingestion of hypoglycin A toxin which is found in some sycamore leaves, seedlings & seeds. The disease has a 75% fatality rate and there appears to be a genetic predisposition.

Clinical signs include depression, weakness, muscle tremors, fast/irregular heart rhythm, difficulties in breathing, colic, dark red/brown urine to name but a few. Severely affected horses become recumbent & others may be found already deceased.

Diagnosis is based on the presence of compatible clinical signs, a history of grazing pasture containing sycamore trees & blood work.

Intensive medical treatment is required but this may not be sufficient to save the patient. Treatment is predominantly based on supportive care including administration of large volumes of intravenous fluid therapy.

Prevention is based on preventing exposure to sycamore seedlings in Spring and seeds & leaves in Autumn. The area surrounding sycamore trees should be fenced off and the seeds & leaves collected. It is important to remember that the seeds (helicopters) may travel up to 200 yards. Therefore, pasture beyond the sycamore tree should be searched for seeds. Additional forage should be provided in Autumn if pasture is poor, pasture density reduced & time at pasture restricted.

The RVC offer a sycamore sample test for identifying plants containing the Hypoglycin A toxin. Please ask your veterinary surgeon for further information.

Equine Flu Update

As of August 21st, 220 outbreaks of Equine Influenza have been confirmed throughout the UK. So far, the highest incidence occurred during the month of June with 63 confirmed outbreaks closely followed by July with 51 confirmed outbreaks.

To date, there have been 8 confirmed outbreaks in Lancashire & an additional 5 confirmed outbreaks in Manchester. These 13 confirmed outbreaks have all involved unvaccinated horses highlighting the importance of vaccination. It is important to remember that vaccinated horses can still succumb but severity of clinical disease & viral shedding is vastly reduced.

Booster vaccinations continue to be recommended at 6 monthly intervals to ensure protective antibody levels remain high to maximise your horse's protective immunity.

AHT Animal Health Trust *helpful guide to attending equine events*

The following advice is designed to provide some help to horse owners and competitors to reduce the risk, both to your horse and other horses, acquiring and spreading equine flu through attending any equine event.

- 1** Ensure your horse has been vaccinated within 6 months and allow 1 week between vaccination and going to the show
- 2** A RAISED TEMPERATURE (>38.5°C)
If you have any concerns about your horse's health (fever, cough, lethargy etc.) do not go to the competition
- 3** Do not let your horse graze at the competition, an infectious horse may have grazed in that field too!
- 4** Do not share water or feed buckets or use communal water troughs
- 5** Do not share tack, such as bits and bridles
- 6** Don't let your horse make contact with other horses
- 7** Ensure if you're stabling away, that the stable has been cleaned and disinfected - including feed mangers and water drinkers before you use it
- 8** Isolate your horse when returning to your home premises. Carefully monitor incl. taking its rectal temperature twice daily. Any concerns call your vet

Finally, if you are concerned about your horse's health, please consult your vet for advice.
To find out more about the work of the Animal Health Trust, go to www.aht.org.uk. Charity number 209642



Ragwort

Ragwort is another plant that is poisonous to our horses. During its first year, ragwort grows close to the ground and resembles a rosette of leaves. During subsequent years, ragwort generally flowers from mid-June until November with seeds ripening during July and August before they are shed from September onwards. Whilst intact, ragwort is generally quite unpalatable and horses don't tend to eat it unless no alternate forage is available. Ragwort becomes much more palatable for horses when it is treated using a herbicide but hasn't yet fully decomposed or when it is cut down and subsequently dries out. Therefore, one of the main sources of exposure to our horses is when it is inadvertently incorporated into hay or haylage.

The toxin in ragwort, pyrrolizidine alkaloid, is generally a cumulative toxin. While a toxic dose may be consumed on one occasion, it is much more common for a patient to consume the toxic dose over a longer period of time i.e. years.

The toxin causes irreparable damage to the patient's liver which can lead to liver failure which is fatal. Clinical signs of liver failure are often only apparent when greater than 75% of a patient's liver is affected. Clinical signs include depression/abnormal demeanour, reduced appetite, weight loss, jaundice, diarrhoea, photosensitization (sunburn) to name but a few.

Diagnosis is based on the presence of compatible clinical signs, with/without a history of grazing ragwort-infested pasture, blood work & ideally, a liver biopsy.

Treatment is generally of a palliative nature.

Should you notice ragwort in your horse's field, it is vitally important to take action to try prevent further spread.

A suitable herbicide may be used on mature plants in late Spring. Herbicides should also be utilised in Autumn to control seedlings. Horses should be removed from the treated field as per the manufacturer's instructions and only returned once sufficient time has elapsed & the 'dead' plant has decayed or has been manually removed. For further information see <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pesticides/news/information-update-0516.htm>.

Alternatively, ragwort may be manually removed by pulling the plant up. It is vitally important to ensure the entire root is removed to prevent re-growth. Removed plant may be burned or removed by a commercial company.

For further information check out:

www.bhs.org.uk/our-work/welfare/our-campaigns/ragwort-toolkit/toolkit-dealing-with-ragwort-scotland/ragwort-removal-at-plant-stage

Testing for Cushing's

Blood tests for Cushing's can be performed throughout the year. The hormone which we measure, ACTH, has a seasonal rise during the Autumnal months and for this reason, the blood test performs at its best during the Autumn. Therefore, if your horse has had a previous borderline test result, it is worth considering a re-test at this time of year. Please contact us for further information on 01257 483161.

Worming Re-Cap

Following on from our Summer Newsletter article on worming, here is a 'rough' guide illustrating a responsible worming plan. A blood test for small encysted redworm will hopefully be available at the end of 2019/beginning of 2020 which will enable us to worm for small encysted redworm only if indicated based on test results. It is important to remember that good pasture hygiene (i.e. poo picking to reduce pasture contamination with worm eggs) plays an integral role in the success of a worming plan. It is also important to remember that 80% of worm burden occurs in 20% of the equine population. In other words, some horses are notorious for repeatedly having 'high' worm egg counts despite their owner's best efforts. If you have any questions about worming or would like us to tailor a more specific worming programme for your yard, please contact us.

Month	March/April (before turnout)	June/July	August/September	November/December
Test	Faecal Worm Egg Count	Faecal Worm Egg Count	Faecal Worm Egg Count Tapeworm Test	
Action required	Administer a wormer if indicated based on test result- seek your veterinary practice's advice.	Worm only if indicated based on test result. Your veterinary practice will advise a suitable wormer.	Worm only if indicated based on test result. Your veterinary practice will advise a suitable wormer. If not testing for tapeworm, administer a wormer containing praziquantel or give pyrantel at a double dose.	Administer a moxidectin wormer after the first frost for small encysted redworm (once the diagnostic test is commercially available, testing should be performed & a wormer only administered based on test results).

Autumn Nutrition

Frequently, as we enter the Autumnal months, we can become a little complacent with regards to grazing due to the disappearance of Spring/Summer grass. However, Autumn remains an 'at-risk' time of year for ultimately the year-round problem of laminitis. Last year, we saw a particularly high incidence of laminitis during the Autumn & Winter months. Therefore, ongoing vigilance with regards to weight & diet is required.

For overweight horses/ponies, grazing should be restricted and the recommendation is to limit time at grass, to graze on a bare paddock & to utilise a grazing muzzle. Whilst stabled, these horses & ponies may be offered soaked hay. Hay should ideally be soaked for 8-12 hours prior to feeding; however, in warm weather when soaking for this duration of time, hay can become rancid so soaking for a shorter duration of time is recommended. Hay should be double netted to slow ingestion time. If possible, nets should be suspended from the roof in the middle of the stable, again to slow ingestion speed.



If restricting the quantity of hay fed for weight loss purposes, feeding 1.5% of the horse/pony's body weight, in kilos of hay weighed dry, per day, is recommended as a starting point. For a 500kg horse, this would equate to 7.5kg/day. If the horse/pony has access to grass, a smaller hay requirement will apply and the quantity required will ultimately depend on the duration of time at grass, quality of grazing etc.

Hay should be fed little and often to ensure that the horse or pony is not going for prolonged periods of time without access to fibre. If feeding hard feeds, low starch/sugar feeds should be utilised such as a low-calorie balancer and light chaff.

If making changes to your horse or pony's diet, please do so gradually over a period of a couple of weeks to allow the gut microbes to adapt to the new diet and in turn, reduce gastrointestinal upsets including episodes of colic.

Exercise is as important as diet for weight loss so should not be forgotten.

FIREWORK SEASON



We are coming up to firework season so here are a few tips to reduce your horse's anxiety:

- Find out the details of local displays & alert the organisers that you have horses nearby
- If possible stable your horse or if they are more settled in a paddock leave them out
- If your horse needs to stay out, scatter hay around the field to keep them occupied
- Check the fencing in your field is secure and there are no protruding nails
- Add bright coloured tape or old CD's to your fencing, this will make your horse aware of the fence
- A treat ball may help to keep your horse occupied
- A plastic mirror on the wall in the stable can make the horse calmer, thinking it has company
- Music is also a good option to reduce the sound of fireworks
- Check your horse throughout the evening
- Any concerns, please speak to your vet for advice in keeping your horse calm
- After the fireworks check the field for used fireworks as they could cause injury

Be Safe & Seen

Horse riding is becoming an ever-increasing leisure sport, with more and more horse riders hacking on the roads. Most do not choose to ride on the road, but for many this is unavoidable.

Sadly, there is an increasing number of incidents between horses and vehicles. As we are all aware, horses can be unpredictable and so it is vital that all riders and vehicles know how to remain safe around horses, on the roads. All road users have a legal duty of care for other road users – see the Highway Code:

www.highwaycodeuk.co.uk/rules-about-animals-horse-riders

www.highwaycodeuk.co.uk/other-road-users



Here are some tips to keep you safe and seen on the roads:

Advice for horse riders

- Wear Hi-Viz clothing for you and your horse no matter what time of day or what time of year
- Wear approved protective headgear
- Always make sure you are alert
- Use the correct hand signals
- Smile and say thank you - a nod or a hand signal
- Be confident to give your horse confidence
- Always ride single file, never ride two abreast

Advice for drivers

- Be alert, horses can be unpredictable
- Please slow down when approaching, passing and drive slowly away
- Whilst overtaking, give the horse plenty of room
- Do not sound your horn or rev your engine
- Be patient and only pass when it is safe to do so

Staff Spotlight - Hannah Smith - Equine Veterinary Surgeon

Hannah Smith - Equine Veterinary Surgeon



Best aspect of working at Gillivervet?

The team and the facilities. We are lucky to be well equipped and have our clinic and inpatient facilities for work ups and investigations.

Any other qualifications?

I passed my Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice in Equine Medicine earlier this year.

Veterinary interests?

My main interest is in equine medicine especially eye, neurological, gastrointestinal and respiratory cases.

Career highlight

Resuscitating a sick foal that came into the hospital when I was an intern at an equine hospital. The foal was treated for a week by specialist vets, interns and nurses and he did really well.

Any hobbies?

I enjoy running, yoga, baking and cooking. I also love to ski when I get the chance and ride when I can.

Favourite food?

This is a tough one I can't pick between Thai and Italian food.

3 most favourite things?

Horses, skiing and cake!