

*Gillivervet*



Gillivervet Summer Newsletter 2020

# Summer



# Hello & Welcome



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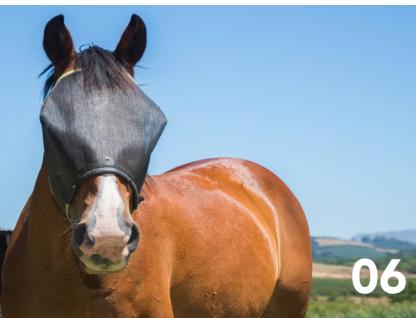
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**Hello** and welcome to the Summer 2020 edition of our newsletter.

We hope you have all stayed safe during the Covid-19 pandemic? We would like to thank you for your continued support and understanding, especially over the last few months.

We would also like to recognise and thank our amazing team, who despite the challenges that Covid-19 presented, have all gone above and beyond to continue the smooth running of the practice. I am sure you will all join us in thanking the whole team for doing such a wonderful job, during these very difficult times.

We are so glad to have returned to some form of 'normal' business. We are pleased to be able to offer our normal full service, although we still remain vigilant with protecting our staff and clients against Covid-19, by maintaining strict protocols. Your co-operation with this protocols is very much appreciated.

The COVID-19 outbreak saw a change in how horse owners were able to manage their horses, leading to increased turnout and less exercise for some horses and ponies. Check our page 03 to find out our tips for managing weight.

As the horse world gets going again with the competition season back in full swing, we have put together some tips on how to keep your horse cool this Summer. All horses will benefit from effective cooling, no matter the type of competition or the level at which they are performing. Turn to page 05 to find out more.

With Summer also brings pesky flies. Not only annoying they are also a health risk to our horses. On page 06, learn how to be prepared and start your fly control programme before the flies really take hold.

**On behalf of everyone at Gillivervet, we hope you have a fantastic Summer and are able to safely get out and about with your horses.**

# Gillivervet News

## John Gilliver BVSc MRCVS, celebrating 40 years as a vet!



This year, John has been qualified 40 years!

John was one of nine people in his year to graduate with honors. When he qualified there was no internet, no computers, no ultrasound and no mobile phones. How did they manage?

John has spent the whole of his veterinary career madly enthusiastic about all aspects of equine work, but particularly stud and breeding. His first attempt with frozen semen was 24 years ago, and that offspring now lives just across from the practice!!

John has had numerous employees over his 40 years, and has actively encouraged numerous vet students and school leavers to join the profession (he also put one or two off).

John keeps an open mind on all new techniques and approaches, he is always happy to discuss and learn from our more recently qualified veterinarians, and is also there to give support and backup when needed.

John is very proud to head what he considers to be his best team ever at Gillivervet.

He is looking forward to the next 10/15 years and hopes that he will still be hunting on his 80th!

## John's Coast to Coast Cycle

On 01/08/2020 John will be taking part in and completing a Coast to Coast Cycle (Lytham to Scarborough)!

All money raised goes to our chosen charity 'Pets as Therapy'.

Pets As Therapy (PAT) is a national charity founded in 1983. There are approximately 6000 active PAT visiting volunteer teams across the UK who would normally be visiting people in need of companion animal therapy. People who due to their circumstances cannot have access to a pet of their own.

Can you imagine what it would be like to no longer receive the comfort and joy that your own pet brings you? Every week PAT visiting teams help thousands of people in hospitals, care homes, hospices, prisons and schools, but since Coronavirus struck all PAT activities have been halted.

Please use the link below if you would like to sponsor John and support this great cause:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/john-gilliver2>



## Early / Late Appointments

Due to the practice now being back up to full capacity, we are now able to offer the early/late appointment scheme again.

These appointments are available Monday to Thursday only. They run from 6:30am - 7:30pm, and must be booked 24 hours in advance through the office. There is no added charge for this service.

We would like to remind clients that social distancing must be adhered to, and if you feel unwell or have any symptoms of COVID-19, please notify us and we will do our best to accommodate regarding your appointment.



## Equine Obesity

The COVID-19 outbreak saw a change in how we were able to manage our horses. Restriction in movement, yard closures and a stop on competitions led to increased turnout and less exercise of some horses and ponies. Grass is not like salad for horses! Our pastures often contain a high sugar content and can result in horses consuming up to 5x more energy than required which leads to weight gain and ultimately obesity. Where possible we must aim to limit the impact that this might have on the weight control of our horses.

**Obesity and recent weight gain can have a number of negative consequences on health including:**

- Increased laminitis risk
- Poorer prognosis for recovery from laminitis
- Increased risk of other causes of lameness from carrying extra weight
- Increase in pro-inflammatory mediators
- Respiratory compromise- mass of the respiratory tract may decrease relative to body mass
- Strangulating small intestinal lesions (colic) due to pedunculated lipomas

### Tips for managing weight:

- Body condition score your horse regularly to monitor weight and identify weight increases early which are then easier to reverse with restricted diet
- Swap high quality forage for low quality forage
- If managing horses at pasture, restrict grass intake using strip grazing. Advance fencing by small amounts twice daily to break up grass meals. Ensure good pasture management removing ragwort etc
- Decreasing duration of time at pasture using stabling can lead to the horse consuming more if access to grass during turnout time is not restricted
- If restricting your horse's diet it is important to include a low calorie feed balancer to ensure the horse is still receiving nutrients needed

## New Equine ID Regulations

**The deadline for compulsory microchipping is coming soon!**

From the 1st October 2020 it will be compulsory in England for all horse owners to microchip their horses, ponies and donkeys. Please use the following link for further information:

<https://www.worldhorsewelfare.org/advice/general-advice/new-equine-id-regulations>

## Equine Mites



Is your horse stamping their feet or itching their legs?

Mites are most commonly found in feathered native breeds, such as Cobs, Shires and Clydesdales. Affected horses are extremely itchy and constantly seen stamping or biting their lower limbs.

Although the mites often cannot be seen with the naked eye, a clinical examination from your vet is often sufficient enough to diagnose this irritable condition.

Further diagnosis can be made from a skin scrape, which will then be examined under a microscope. Currently there are no licensed treatments available, but the most commonly used treatment is Dectomax, which is given as a course of injections. For milder cases, shampoos and topical washes may be effective.

Clipping your horse's feathers and replacing all the bedding in their stable often, are also ways to manage and reduce the risk of mites.



## Equine First Aid: Wound Management

Horses and ponies are prey animals and thus over time, have evolved mechanisms to enable a speedy getaway from any perceived threats. In the modern setting, these “flight” instincts tend to result in frequent collisions with man-made structures including wire fencing, gates, water troughs, etc – structures which evolution hasn’t accounted for yet! For this reason, wounds affecting any region of the body but most commonly the limb and head regions are a common equine emergency that presents to our practice.

Wounds come in all shapes and sizes and the best outcomes are usually achieved when they are assessed and treated promptly. Extensive lacerations or heavily bleeding wounds generally receive such attention however sometimes it is the small, relatively innocuous looking wounds which can have much more serious implications for the horse if they are neglected in the early stages. Specifically, this is the case when such wounds are in close proximity to a synovial structure like a joint or a tendon sheath. The horse may not present all that lame initially and if the wound is small without much active bleeding, owners may be tempted to treat it themselves with topical sprays etc. If the wound is deep enough that the synovial structure is involved however, generally sepsis or infection of said structure will develop within a short period of time, usually leading to severe lameness and a poor prognosis for full recovery if the horse is not treated aggressively.

Despite providing a 24 hour emergency service, there are times when there may be a delay between a phone call being made and the vet arriving at your property. In these instances, it is prudent to have a first aid kit ready to deal with certain emergencies in consultation with your vet over the phone.

Suggestions for a basic first aid kit include:

- Plenty of bandage materials including poultice dressing for foot abscesses. As limb wounds are a common emergency we see, if the wound is very contaminated it is good practice to clean it by simple hosing if available and then applying a protective bandage to help prevent further contamination and slow down any bleeding before the vet arrives. Do not be afraid of padding (e.g. cotton wool, gamgee), the more the better!
- Thermometer and stethoscope. These can both be purchased quite cheaply and are invaluable tools in giving the vet a better idea as to the status of a sick or painful horse. Normal ranges of vital signs in an adult horse:
  - **Temperature 37.5-38.5°C**
  - **Heart Rate 30-45 beats/minute**
  - **Respiration Rate 12-16 breaths/minute**
- Wound ointments and spray. These products are useful in cases of simple superficial wounds which are not directly over any vital structures including joints and tendon sheaths. Take care not to use caustic products or products containing cortisone (e.g. betnovate) on a fresh wound as they can delay/inhibit healing
- Records of tetanus, influenza and other vaccinations plus any recent medications are very useful as your vet will generally ask for this information when taking a history
- If you have a smartphone, feel free to take pictures of a wound or eye injury for example and send to your vet. A picture can paint a thousand words for us sometimes!

# How to keep your horse cool in the summer



**Summer can be a lovely time for horse-riding, but high temperatures carry health risks for your horse. Hot weather can lead to dehydration, lethargy, sunburn and stomach problems that may even include colic. What can you do to help avoid these hazards and keep your horse cool?**

## Offer water

Your horse should always have access to fresh water, but don't be tempted to make it icy cold: 20°C is about right.

## Don't forget the salts

When horses sweat, they're losing salts as well as water, and they need to replace both to restore the fluid balance in the body. A mineral salt block may be enough to allow your horse to replace lost salts. Adding electrolytes to the horse's water can also help, but many commercial electrolytes contain more sugar than salt! Make sure you get one with salt (sodium chloride) listed as the first ingredient. Always offer plain, fresh water alongside the water containing the electrolyte product.

## Protect your horse from the sun

Horses can burn in sensitive places such as the eye area, and this increases their skin cancer risk. Make sure your horse always has access to enough shade in the hotter part of the day. Also consider applying sunblock to unpigmented areas of skin.



## Choose cooler times of day

In really hot weather get out in the cooler early mornings and evenings to exercise your horse. If his stable is cool, why not keep him in during the day and turn him out at night? This will help keep your horse cool.

## Keep an eye on feeding habits

The horse's stomach secretes gastric acid continuously and their digestive health depends on getting plenty of fibrous food to mop it up. Warm weather is a potential colic risk not only because it can cause horses to lose their appetite, but also because it may affect the quality of the pasture available for grazing – they may have eaten all the grass. Make sure there's enough hay or grass available and keep an eye out for any signs that your horse is losing interest in food.

## Know the signs of heatstroke

Signs of heatstroke include an elevated heart rate, a high temperature, lethargy and excessive sweating (or lack of sweating). An overheated horse may also keep breathing hard in an attempt to cool down. Get to know your horse well and you will soon be able to tell if things are not quite right or if he is getting distressed. Always ask for professional help if you are worried – better safe than sorry.

## Keep your horse cool effectively

All horses will benefit from effective cooling, no matter the type of competition or the level at which they are performing. This includes event horses, dressage horses, show jumpers, racehorses, polo ponies, endurance horses, driving horses, show horses and gymkhana ponies. Horses competing in temperatures of more than 26°C are less prone to heatstroke if they are cooled down quickly and effectively. The trick is to apply cold water, scrape it off and then re-apply while the horse is being walked around, which helps with respiratory rate recovery. It's best to try and carry out the cooling and walking in the shade.

**“All horses will benefit from effective cooling, no matter the type of competition or the level at which they are performing!”**

# Fly control: keeping your horse healthy and happy in summer

Flies are not only annoying they are also a health risk to our horses. While it's bad news that they are inevitable during the warmer months the good news is that you can take steps to reduce the fuss, bother and disease they cause. The best way is to be prepared and start your fly control programme before the flies really take hold.

It's not just horse flies you need to worry about. Horse flies are the culprits that usually spring to mind but there are plenty of other flying pests that can make your horse's life miserable and some can cause more than just misery. The bot fly lays eggs, usually on the horse's forelegs. These hatch in the horse's mouth as it is grooming itself and are transmitted to the stomach where they continue their life-cycle. The house or stable fly can transmit a worm that irritates the stomach and aggravates wounds. Midges can also cause an allergic reaction in some horses, commonly called sweet itch, which is far from sweet for your horse.

Other nasties such as ticks, lice and mites can make your skin crawl just to read about them and they may cause considerable discomfort to your horse.

If you have a problem with flies it pays to identify the types involved as this will give you some clues about how best to control them. For example, black flies are more likely to be found near streams whereas mosquitoes and midges like to hang out around stagnant water.

The best approach to fly control is two-fold: good management and the right fly repellent or insecticide.

## **Stable management for effective fly control**

Flies tend to be attracted to and lay eggs on damp organic material such as feed or manure so keeping the yard swept and clean, removing droppings from the field and keeping the muck-heap away from the horses can all help to reduce the irritation posed by flies.



- Regularly clear horse droppings away from the stable and pasture so flies can't breed in them
- Keep the muck heap well away from where your horse sleeps and grazes
- Keep the stable scrupulously clean
- Make sure there are no puddles near the stables
- Consider putting a fly rug and/or a fly face-mask on your horse if it is badly affected
- Consider stabling your horse at certain times of the day – mornings and evenings when many flies are about
- Some people even put a fan in the stable to stop the flies coming in

## **Which fly product should I use?**

As an owner it can be very difficult to choose which fly product will work best for you. A repellent aims to make the horse less attractive to the fly. An insecticide aims to kill the fly as soon as possible after contact with no biting needed. For maximum effectiveness, treatment should be started before the fly season has begun, to control breeding, and continued at regular intervals throughout the season.

There are many different sorts of repellents and insecticides but you should use one that's specifically designed for use on horses unless your vet has specifically advised you otherwise. Some need daily application, others less frequently. You might want to use a spray insecticide on the horse's coat and a cream product on sensitive areas like ears and sheath. You can also use some specifically designed insecticides in areas around the horse's stable where flies congregate such as the roof or on mesh around the windows – always check the product label carefully to ensure it is safe to use in a horse's environment.

Speak to your vet or somebody suitably qualified (an SQP) for the right information on products and preventative measures.



# What are splints?

A 'splint' is a bony swelling, most often seen on the inside of leg below the knee or hock. They usually form over weeks or months and are commonly a result of abnormal forces on splint bones due to workload or abnormal conformation of the knee or hock. If the splint has appeared quickly then this would most likely be due to local trauma such as a kick.

Splints can lead to all types of problems, if the cause is not identified. They can be tricky to get settled and can take a long time to recover, plus they can also require a lot of treatment.

Local treatment to reduce swelling and limiting exercise can help "take down" a splint but often some fibrous tissue swelling is left and this can be difficult to resolve. Rest may play an important part in helping to reduce the swelling. be more effective! Other therapies such as extra-corporeal shock wave or surgery might also be advised by your vet.

We would therefore advise you to contact us to arrange an exam and discuss correct treatment options, to ensure the problem does not develop further.



## \*\*\*Staff Spotlight\*\*\* with vet Hannah Birch



**When did you join Gillivervet?**  
I joined the team in August 2019.

**Veterinary interests?**  
Lameness and AI/Stud Work.

**Any pets?**  
Weimaraner called Annie, old event pony called Sunset and a warmblood yearling called Revel. Plus many more horses, dogs, cats and sheep belonging to the rest of the family at home.

**Any hobbies?**  
Riding, Skiing and Kayaking.

**What is your favourite thing about your job?**  
Driving around with Annie dog meeting our wonderful clients and all their horses.

**If you were a superhero, what powers would you have?**  
Shapeshifting (an idea borrowed from a colleague), so I could eat all the cake I liked, and not have to worry about being such a good doer!

**Where's your favourite place in the world?**  
Really early summer morning, galloping through Delamere Forest.

