

Gillivervet



Gillivervet Winter Newsletter 2019/2020

# Winter



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# Hello & Welcome

**Hello** & welcome to the Winter edition of the Gillivervet Newsletter!

The Autumn has again proved a busy few months for the team with showing successes, a new arrival, an engagement and the first of our Winter evening talks.

With deteriorating weather conditions and dark & gloomy days, I think it is fair to say, Winter is not a horse owner's preferred season! Winter poses many challenges for us and in this instalment, we will explore some of the more common Winter ailments and management of said conditions.

We also discuss sarcoids, which are the most common tumour of the horse. Now the weather has changed and the flies have disappeared, it is a good time of year to talk to your vet if your horse has sarcoids, as now would be a good time to have them removed.

As always, we hope you enjoy this newsletter & please do let us know if you would like any particular topics covering in the Spring edition.

Lastly....please remember Spring is only a few months away and we will be back once again enjoying the sunshine, longer days and more time with our horses.

On behalf of everyone at Gillivervet, we hope that you have had a fantastic Christmas and wish you all the best for the year ahead.

*Leona*



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## STARS Northern Champion of Champions

Team Gillivervet were recently the vets on call at STARS Northern Champion of Champions.

We had a fabulous three days at the event and thoroughly enjoyed meeting everyone.

In addition, we raised over £500 for 'Hearing Dogs for Deaf People.'

A huge thank you to everyone who contributed.



## Congratulations Anne



HOYS success. Anne and Oliver finished second and were reserve champions. Well done to team Oliver!

## New parents alert!

The latest member of Team Gillivervet has arrived! Alison and Garth welcomed their gorgeous son Lucas in October.



## Engagement news

Our next congratulations goes to Hannah Smith on her recent engagement to fiancé James.

## Winter hoof care evening

We hope you all enjoyed our Winter Hoof Care evening led by Mark Gilliver.

We have a number of evening talks scheduled so keep an eye on our Facebook page for further information.

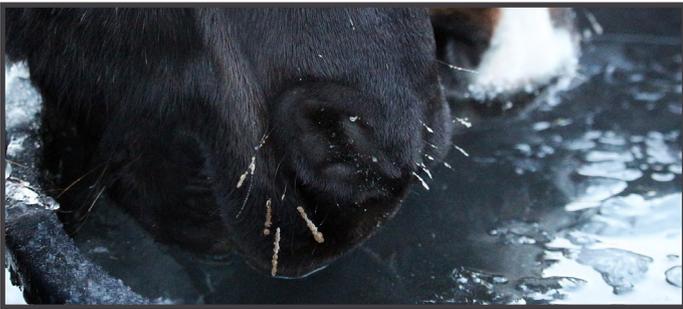
# Winter Checklist



## 1. How to avoid impaction colic

In this freezing cold weather horses tend to drink less. Please make sure your horses are drinking well as frozen icy water can lead to a reduced water input and impaction colic.

- Check troughs regularly, especially at feed times as this stimulates drinking. If there is any ice, break AND remove it.
- Check your horse is passing their normal amount of droppings and that the consistency is normal for them...not too hard or dry.
- If you're feeding hard feed then add extra water, preferably warm!
- Access to a non-molassed salt lick is also useful if your horse is not receiving complete feed, to help stimulate drinking



## 2. Lack of grass

Lack of grass means you will need to change progressively to a forage-based diet to reach your horse's daily needs.

Lack of grass may also mean that horses may try to eat acorns, sycamore seeds, or other poisonous plants which can lead to disease.



## 3. Rugging

It pays to buy a good quality rug and ensure a good fit, to keep your horse warm and dry during the winter. Be careful not to over-rug your horse. Waterproof and wind proof are the most important attributes of an equine rug to be effective, not the tog value. Unless your horse is thin skinned, lacking bodyweight, elderly or has been fully clipped it shouldn't need more than a lightweight rug, unless it's extremely cold.



## 4. Rain scald

Rain scald is caused by the same bacterium implicated in cases of mud fever (*Dermatophilus congolensis*).

Rain scald generally affects the top of the horse's body, in particular, the back & occurs following prolonged wetting of the skin. The resulting skin softening allows bacteria to enter resulting in a dermatitis characterised by hair loss & crusting.

Hair typically comes away in tufts being bound by a scab/crust.

Treatment is based on preventing further skin wetting & treating the lesions present. Surrounding hair may be clipped provided this does not result in additional trauma & the area should be thoroughly cleaned using a dilute, warm chlorhexidine solution. Topical antimicrobials/anti-inflammatories (creams) may be prescribed by your vet in addition to systemic antimicrobials (oral/injectable) if indicated.

## 5. Ice & snow compact in hooves

Ice and snow can compact in horses hooves (specifically horses with shoes on). It is very important to pick the hooves out regularly during this cold weather.



## 6. Mites

Mites typically affect the legs of our feathered breeds. Mites can also affect other breeds and one of the more common areas affected in non-feathered breeds is the facial area.

Mite infections can occur throughout the year but as mite populations are highest in Winter, this is the time of year we see the most clinical cases.

Affected horses display signs of intense itchiness and those with leg mites frequently and repeatedly stamp their feet, bite/chew at their feathers or scratch on various objects. On closer examination, crusts & hair loss, with/without weeping lesions are generally present. Some horses markedly object to examination of the lesions so care should be exercised when attempting to examine.

Diagnosis is confirmed by examining a skin brushing under the microscope but frequently diagnosis is based on history & physical examination findings.

Treatment should ideally start with clipping; however, most owners do not want to proceed down this route in the first instance but in the case of treatment failure, clipping is highly recommended. The limbs should then be bathed in a solution to try soften/break up scabs/crusts prior to the application of a topical treatment. There are many topical treatments on the market indicating the lack of a gold standard treatment & the fact that different horses respond differently to different treatments (what may work in one patient may not work in another). An injectable treatment is also available. There is a frequently utilised treatment option but its use is off-licence in horses. Following treatment, your horse's stable should be thoroughly cleaned out to prevent re-infection.

## 7. Hoof Abscess

Hoof abscesses, often called 'pus in the foot', occur when the structural integrity of the foot is compromised, allowing foreign material to get into the sensitive tissues beneath the hoof wall. This foreign material starts off an inflammatory reaction forming pus, which as it expands puts pressure on the sensitive soft tissues within the foot causing a great deal of pain.

The main treatment for any abscess is drainage. As soon as you suspect an abscess, call your vet. Early treatment to release the pus and drain the abscess will usually immediately reduce the pain and prevent damaging results. Luckily, the vast majority of equine hoof abscesses are quick and easy to treat, with most horses becoming comfortable within 24 hours, and back in work within a week, with no long-term complications.



## 8. Mud Fever

Mud fever is caused by the bacterium *Dermatophilus congolensis*. Similar to rain scald, bacteria gain entry to the skin of the distal limbs following skin softening induced by wet/muddy conditions. This results in scabbing of the distal limbs which subsequently peel off to leave red sores underneath. Occasionally, cellulitis can ensue.

Treatment involves removing the patient from the wet/muddy conditions and keeping indoors until the lesions have healed. Gentle exercise in a clean/dry area is important to assist with limb swelling. Where lots of sores are present, sand can be quite abrasive so exercise in a sand school should be avoided. In early, uncomplicated cases, topical treatment involving a combination of shampoos and creams is generally sufficient but in more severe cases and those with secondary cellulitis, oral antibiotics, anti-inflammatories +/- steroids are indicated.

**If you are worried about any of these issues, please contact us on 01257 483161.**

## Banishing Bots

Bots can be irritating for your horse and the onset of winter is the best time for you to get these pesky parasites under control.

What's are bots?

Bots are the insect larvae of the bot fly and are a common adult parasite found within the horse's stomach, yet they don't show up in a standard Faecal Worm Egg Count (FWEC). Brown, hairy and bee-like to look at, adult bot flies can be a buzzy annoyance for your horse in the summer months.

The female bot fly is a prolific egg layer. She can produce up to 1,000 distinctive yellow eggs on the hair on your horse's legs and shoulders or around the eyes, mouth and nose.

Your horse will inadvertently ingest the bot eggs while he's grooming himself or a companion. The bot larvae will mature in his mouth and develop in the stomach for up to a year before emerging in the dung. The larvae then burrow into the ground and develop into adults. Depending on the conditions, the adults emerge in 3 to 10 weeks and the cycle begins again.

Spotting bots: Bots are most easily identified by the presence of the eggs on your horse's legs but this can be an unreliable indicator because a horse with no signs of eggs may still have a bots in their stomach.

Infection can show as mouth irritation and occasionally it is possible to see the eruption of migrating larvae from the gums around the cheek teeth. Severe infestations can cause ulceration of the stomach lining, however the majority of horses will develop no obvious clinical symptoms.

The best way to control bots is to administer a suitable wormer in the winter, after the first frost when the adult flies have died and before the bots mature.

The correct worming protocol will not only help to safeguard the health of your horse but will also have an impact in reducing the bot fly population in your area - which could help to make you and your horse's life more comfortable next summer.

If you haven't yet treated your horse for encysted small redworm a practical and cost-effective solution may be to combine this with your bots treatment. It's important to speak to your vet to find the most suitable treatment for your horse.



## Compulsory Microchipping

From October 2020 it will be compulsory for all horse owners to microchip their horses, ponies and donkeys, regardless of their age. The new law has been introduced to crack down on abuse and improve animal welfare.

Central Equine Database will hold passport, microchip and ownership details which can be accessed by the police and local authorities to track down and punish the owners of horses that have been dumped, and ensure the animals are cared for. It will also be easier for missing or stolen horses to be reunited with their owners.

If by October 2020 horse owners have not microchipped their horses, ponies and donkeys, they could face sanctions from their local authority including a compliance notice and a fine of up to £200.

If your horse, pony or donkey is not yet microchipped, we strongly advise you get this done soon. Why not combine it with a routine vet visit?

If you are purchasing a horse, you should check the horse has a passport and is microchipped. Your vet will be able to check the horse is microchipped.

Microchipping ensures every horse, pony and donkey is each identified by using a microchip. Each microchip, which is only the size of a grain of rice, holds a unique number which can be read by a microchip scanner. The whole procedure takes just a few minutes to do, and lasts a lifetime.

For more information on please use the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/compulsory-microchipping-to-improve-horse-welfare>

“**The whole procedure takes just a few minutes to do and lasts a lifetime!**”

# Sarcoids

Sarcoids, arguably the most prevalent skin tumour in non-grey horses, are believed to be caused by a strain of bovine papilloma virus & transmitted by flies. Therefore, Summer is a key time for spread while lesions tend to grow over the Winter months. Sarcoids can ultimately occur at any skin location but the most common affected areas are those prone to sweating which in turn attract flies- namely the arm pits, inside of hindlimbs & in geldings, the sheath.

There are 6 different types of sarcoid reported at this time:

1. Occult sarcoids (flat sarcoids) are areas of thickened skin with a roughened surface
2. Verrucous sarcoids are wart-like in appearance
3. Nodular sarcoids are firm and circular with a layer of overlying normal skin
4. Fibroblastic sarcoids are fleshy, rapidly growing, ulcerated masses
5. Mixed sarcoids are a combination of 2 or more sarcoid types
6. Malignant sarcoids are extremely aggressive and spread/grow rapidly in the local area of skin



## Veterinary intervention

Sarcoids are skin tumours so treatment should be undertaken in a timely fashion & as advised by your veterinary surgeon.

Early treatment enables the sarcoid to be treated before it increases further in size & reduces the chance of spread & further lesions developing.

The recommended treatment will depend on the type of sarcoid present & it's location. The two most common treatment are topical chemotherapy cream (traditionally called the Liverpool cream) or laser removal. However, there are many other options and your veterinary surgeon will decide upon the most appropriate treatment for your horse.

**If you are concerned that your horse may have a sarcoid we suggest you contact us to examine the lesion sooner rather than later.**

**To contact us, please call 01257 483161.**



# The Petplan Veterinary Awards 2020



The Petplan Veterinary Awards recognise the fantastic work that goes on in veterinary practices across the UK.

Petplan has worked closely with the veterinary profession for over 40 years and hosts these independent industry awards to recognise the hard work and dedication of veterinary staff caring for our pets. If you think your veterinary practice or someone in the practice team deserves to win complete the nomination form here: <https://www.petplan.co.uk/about-petplan/vets/awards/>

Nominations for the Petplan Veterinary Awards 2020 are open until 16th January 2020.

Nominations are anonymous and you can nomination again for a different category.

Three finalists will be selected in each category in early March 2020 and invited to attend a prestigious award ceremony on Thursday 2nd April where the winners will be announced.

The winners will be published on the 3rd April 2020, so don't forget to check back then to find out who won.

## Staff Spotlight with Charlotte Hartley

### Job title?

RVN/Clinical Co-Ordinator



### Veterinary Interests?

Practice standards / stock control / customer relations / quality improvement



### Best part of working at Gillivervet?

The team and the freedom/ support to progress my career



### Highlight of your career?

Guiding the practice to gaining 2 outstanding awards for the RCVS PSS and watching my hard work in stock control pay off!!

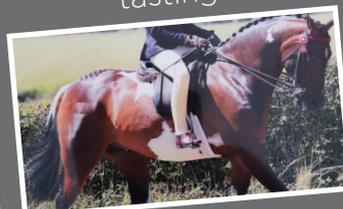
### Any pets?

I have 2 horses – Roy and Doolie, 2 dogs - Bella the Labrador and William the chiweenie and a cat called Princess!



### Hobbies?

My hobbies include my boys (the horses and competing them with my daughter) and wine tasting!!



### Favourite food?

Fillet steak Rossini!



### Who do you most admire?

My dad! He's a work horse. I've watched him go through so many hard times in life and be at rock bottom but he is so ambitious and never gives up!