



*Isabelle Vets*

# NEWSLETTER

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Isabelle Vets Ltd, Route Isabelle, St Peter Port, Guernsey, GY1 1QR

01481 723863 | [vets@isabellevets.co.uk](mailto:vets@isabellevets.co.uk) | [isabellevets.co.uk](http://isabellevets.co.uk)

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# Our Quarterly Update

## Welcome Ashley

We are thrilled to welcome Ashley Schofield to our team as our new equine vet! With his extensive knowledge and passion for equine health, Ashley has hit the ground running, quickly becoming an invaluable asset to our practice. His dedication to providing top-notch care and his compassionate approach have already made a significant impact. Please join us in giving Ashley a warm welcome and wishing him great success in his journey with us. Welcome aboard, Ashley!



**Enhancing our equine veterinary services:**

Over the summer months, we will be enhancing our equine veterinary facilities and equipment to better serve your four-legged friends on the island. Our goal is to provide the highest standard of veterinary services, supporting the health and wellbeing of the island's equine community.



## Introducing sweet itch relief

**We are pleased to introduce a course of injections designed to support your horse's immune system and alleviate the symptoms of sweet itch.**

Sweet itch, otherwise known as Insect Bite Hypersensitivity, is an allergic reaction to proteins in the saliva of the biting Culicoides midge. Although all horses are bitten by these flies, only some develop an allergy. This disease causes immense distress in severely affected animals and can be a major welfare concern.

The allergic reaction causes extreme itchiness and is mainly seen in the late spring and summer when the midges are out although the sweet itch season can be longer in mild winters. It is generally worse in hot humid weather and at dawn and dusk.


## Baby news

Mairi and her husband Robin welcomed their daughter Freya into the world in February. We wish them both a wonderful maternity and will see Mairi back early next year.



Horses often scratch their mane, tail, belly and sometimes other areas as the primary sign, causing broken hairs, hair loss, redness, bleeding and skin thickening. With persistent irritation, the skin thickens and discolours and hair regrowth is poor. It is an extremely uncomfortable disease for both horses and owners. Sometimes the horse may get a secondary skin infection after self-trauma from scratching.

**Please contact us should you have a horse that may benefit from this treatment.**



Regular veterinary care and proactive management are key to enjoying a safe and enjoyable summer with your horses.

# Summer Equine Healthcare

## Essential veterinary services for warm weather wellness

As the summer season approaches, it's important to ensure that your horse is well-prepared for the challenges and adventures that come with the warmer weather. Here's a spotlight on some of our key services that are particularly relevant during the summer months:

### Wellness exams

Regular wellness exams are fundamental for assessing your horse's overall health. During the summer, these exams can help identify any underlying issues exacerbated by the heat or increased activity levels.

### Vaccinations

Summer is often associated with increased exposure to infectious diseases, if out competing more, such as equine influenza. Ensure your horse's vaccinations are up-to-date to provide crucial protection against these diseases.

### Dental care

Dental care is essential all year-round. Regular dental check-ups can prevent issues like uneven wear, dental points and discomfort while chewing.

### Sports medicine

With the summer months often comes increased activity, as such longer hacks, competitions, or training sessions. Our vets can offer services such as lameness evaluations, performance evaluations and rehabilitation programmes for your horse.

### Parasite control programme

Warmer temperatures create ideal conditions for parasites such as worms and insects to thrive. Implementing a strategic parasite control programme tailored to your horse's specific needs is crucial for their health and wellbeing. Regular faecal exams and environmental management practices can help reduce the risk of parasitic infections and their associated health complications. Speak to your vet to create a tailored plan for your horse.

### Summer skincare

Horses are susceptible to various skin conditions exacerbated by heat, humidity and increased exposure to insects. Our vets offer expert advice and treatment strategies to address skin issues, ensuring horses remain healthy, comfortable and happy throughout the summer season.

### Nutritional guidance

Adjustments to your horse's diet may be necessary during the summer to accommodate increased energy expenditure and changes in grazing patterns. Consulting with your vet can ensure your horse receives the proper nutrition to support optimal health and performance.

# Revolutionising Equine Healthcare

## Mobile diagnostic imaging equipment leads the way

Traditionally, diagnosing equine ailments required transporting the horse to specialised facilities equipped with diagnostic imaging tools. However, the advent of mobile diagnostic imaging equipment has brought state-of-the-art technology directly to your yard.

Mobile diagnostic imaging equipment encompasses a range of advanced technologies, including portable ultrasound machines and digital radiography systems. These compact yet powerful devices are specifically designed to be transported easily to different locations, allowing our vets to conduct comprehensive diagnostic procedures on-site.

### Benefits of mobile diagnostic equipment:

#### Diagnosis at your home:

Mobile diagnostic imaging eliminates the need for transporting horses to specialised hospitals for diagnostics. This accessibility is particularly crucial for emergencies or for horses that are not easily transportable due to injuries or illnesses. With a mobile unit, our vets can reach the horse promptly, reducing stress and the risk of exacerbating their condition during transportation.

#### Quick diagnosis:

Timeliness is often critical in equine healthcare, especially in cases of injuries or illnesses that require immediate attention. Mobile imaging equipment allows our vets to perform diagnostic procedures on-site, facilitating rapid assessment and prompt initiation of treatment. Early diagnosis can significantly improve outcomes and minimise complications, ensuring the welfare of the horses.

#### Enhanced precision and accuracy:

State-of-the-art equipment offers high-resolution imaging capabilities, allowing for precise and accurate diagnosis of complex conditions.



Whether identifying subtle fractures, assessing soft tissue injuries, or detecting abnormalities within internal organs, our vets can rely on the clarity and detail provided by these technologies to make informed clinical decisions and develop tailored treatment plans.

#### Facilitated monitoring and follow-up:

In cases where ongoing monitoring is necessary, mobile diagnostic imaging equipment enables our vets to conduct follow-up examinations conveniently at the horse's location. This continuous oversight is invaluable for tracking the progress of healing, adjusting treatment protocols as needed and ensuring optimal recovery outcomes.

#### Collaborative partnerships:

Mobile diagnostic imaging services have revolutionised veterinary care, forging collaborative partnerships between vets and farriers. Working hand in hand, vets and farriers utilise tools like portable X-ray machines and ultrasound to assess injuries, monitor healing progress and ensure optimal hoof health. This collaborative approach not only enhances the efficiency of treatment but also elevates the standard of care for horses, promoting their wellbeing and performance.

# Understanding Equine Behaviour

## Insights into the mind of the horse

Horses, known for their intelligence, sensitivity and social nature, exhibit a wide range of behaviours that reflect their natural instincts and interactions with their environment and peers.

### The nature of equine behaviour

Horses are inherently social animals with a hierarchical social structure. In the wild, they live in herds where each member has a specific role and position within the group. This social organisation influences their behaviour, including communication, hierarchy establishment and bonding with other horses.

Communication among horses primarily involves body language, vocalisations and subtle cues. They use their ears, eyes, tail, and body posture to convey emotions, intentions, and warnings to other herd members. Understanding these communication signals is essential for horse handlers to interpret and respond appropriately to their horse's needs and emotions.

Furthermore, horses are prey animals, which means they are constantly vigilant to potential threats in their surroundings. Their natural flight response is a survival mechanism developed over millions of years of evolution. Even in domestic settings, horses retain this instinct, and sudden movements, loud noises, or unfamiliar objects can trigger their flight response.

### Behavioural indicators of health

Equine behaviour can serve as a valuable indicator of a horse's physical and emotional wellbeing. Changes in behaviour may signal underlying health issues, pain, discomfort, or stress.



## Common behavioural indicators of health problems include:

### Altered eating habits

A decrease in appetite or sudden changes in eating patterns can indicate dental issues, gastrointestinal problems, or discomfort.

### Lethargy or depression

A normally active horse that becomes lethargic, withdrawn, or shows signs of depression may be suffering from pain, illness, or emotional distress.

### Aggression or irritability

Uncharacteristic aggression, irritability, or resistance to handling may indicate pain, discomfort, or fear/stress.

### Excessive restlessness or agitation

Restlessness, pacing, or repetitive behaviours could be signs of stress, anxiety, or physical discomfort.

### Sudden behavioural changes

Abrupt changes in behaviour, such as spookiness, refusal to perform tasks, or increased aggression, may indicate pain, injury, or neurological problems.

## Importance of veterinary checks

Vets play a crucial role in assessing and addressing both physical and behavioural aspects of equine health.

### Here's why veterinary checks are vital for horses:

#### Preventive care

Regular check-ups allow vets to detect and address health issues early, preventing them from escalating into more serious problems. This includes dental care, vaccinations and overall wellness assessments.

#### Pain management

Horses are often stoic animals that may not show obvious signs of pain. Veterinary examinations can help identify sources of discomfort, such as musculoskeletal issues, dental problems, or internal injuries, and provide appropriate pain management strategies.

#### Behavioural evaluation

Vets are trained to assess equine behaviour and recognise signs of stress, anxiety, or abnormal behaviour patterns. They can work with owners to address underlying causes, whether they're physical, environmental, or related to training methods.





# Maintaining Equine Hoof Health During Summer

## Tips for hard ground and beyond

As the summer sun beats down and the ground dries out, horse owners face challenges in maintaining the health of their horse's hooves.

The combination of hot, dry weather and hard ground can lead to a variety of hoof-related issues if not properly addressed. Understanding the importance of proactive hoof care during the summer months is essential for keeping horses sound and comfortable.

In this feature, we'll explore some valuable tips and practices for maintaining equine hoof health in the summer, particularly in the context of dealing with hard ground conditions.

### Regular hoof maintenance

Regular hoof care is essential year-round, but it becomes even more critical during the summer when horses are exposed to challenging environmental conditions. Establishing a routine trimming schedule with a qualified farrier is important for keeping hooves properly balanced and trimmed. Trimming helps prevent uneven wear and reduces the risk of cracks and other hoof problems.

### Hydration and moisture management

One of the primary concerns during the summer months is dehydration, which can affect not only the horse's overall health but also the condition of their hooves. Ensure that your horse has access to clean, fresh water at all times to prevent dehydration, which can lead to dry, brittle hooves. Additionally, consider using hoof moisturisers or conditioners to help retain moisture and prevent excessive drying out of the hoof wall and sole.

### Proper nutrition

A well-balanced diet plays a significant role in maintaining healthy hooves year-round, but it becomes especially important during the summer when horses may be grazing on dry, nutrient-deficient pasture. Ensure that your horse's diet includes adequate levels of essential nutrients such as biotin which is vital for hoof health. Consult with your vet or farrier to determine if any supplements are necessary to support hoof growth and strength.





### **Protective measures for hard ground**

In regions where the ground becomes excessively hard during the summer months, additional measures may be necessary to protect horses' hooves from the impact of constant pounding. Consider using hoof boots or pads to provide cushioning and support, particularly during strenuous activities such as riding or turnout on unforgiving terrain. These protective measures can help minimise the risk of bruising, lameness, and other hoof injuries associated with hard ground conditions.

### **Monitoring for signs of stress or injury**

Regularly inspecting your horse's hooves for signs of stress, injury, or abnormalities is essential for early detection and prompt intervention. Look out for signs such as cracks, chips, excessive wear and sensitivity to pressure. If you notice any concerning changes in your horse's hooves, consult with your vet or farrier for guidance on appropriate treatment and management strategies.

### **Adjusting exercise and activity levels**

During periods of hot weather and challenging ground conditions, it may be necessary to adjust your horse's exercise and activity levels to reduce the risk of hoof-related issues. Avoid riding or working horses on excessively hard or rocky terrain.

**By implementing proactive hoof care practices, including regular maintenance, hydration management, proper nutrition and protective measures for hard ground, horse owners can help mitigate the risk of hoof-related issues and ensure that their equine companions remain healthy, comfortable, and sound throughout the summer season and beyond.**

**Remember, when in doubt, consult with your vet or farrier for personalised guidance and recommendations tailored to your horse's specific needs.**

# Common Equine Summer Emergencies

While warmer weather brings joy and opportunities for outdoor activities, it also increases the risk of certain emergencies for horses. From dehydration to heatstroke, understanding these common summer issues and knowing how to handle them can make all the difference in ensuring the wellbeing of your horse.

## Dehydration and heat stress

As temperatures rise, dehydration becomes a significant concern for horses. Signs of dehydration include lethargy, sunken eyes, dry gums and decreased skin elasticity. To prevent dehydration, always ensure access to fresh, clean water and provide ample shade during hot hours. Electrolyte supplements can also help replenish lost minerals during strenuous activities.

If you suspect your horse is dehydrated or suffering from heat stress, move them to a shaded area and contact your vet immediately. Offer small sips of water and use cool water to sponge their body, particularly focusing on the neck, chest, and legs.

## Colic

Colic, a common and potentially life-threatening condition in horses, has an increased risk during the summer months. Factors such as changes in diet, dehydration and heat stress can contribute to colic episodes. Signs of colic include pawing, rolling, sweating, and loss of appetite.

If you suspect colic, remove food and water and monitor your horse closely. Walking may help alleviate discomfort, but avoid excessive exercise. Contact your vet immediately, as colic requires prompt veterinary intervention.



## Sunburn and skin conditions

Just like humans, horses are susceptible to sunburn, particularly those with light-coloured coats or pink skin. Prolonged sun exposure can lead to painful burns and even skin cancer. Additionally, summer humidity and moisture can contribute to skin conditions such as rain scald and dermatitis.

Protect your horse from sunburn by applying equine-safe sunscreen to exposed areas, providing access to shaded areas and using fly sheets and masks. Regular grooming and maintaining a clean environment can help prevent skin conditions. If your horse develops sunburn or skin issues, consult your vet for appropriate treatment.

## Heatstroke

Heatstroke occurs when a horse's body temperature rises to dangerous levels, often due to prolonged exposure to high temperatures and humidity. Signs of heatstroke include rapid breathing, elevated heart rate, excessive sweating, and lethargy.

If you suspect heatstroke, immediately move your horse to a shaded area and begin cooling measures. Use cold water to sponge their body and offer small sips of water. Fan ventilation can also aid in cooling. Contact your vet promptly, as heatstroke requires urgent medical attention.



**Summer presents unique challenges for horse owners, but with vigilance and proper care, many emergencies can be prevented or effectively managed. Regular monitoring of your horse's health, providing ample shade and hydration and promptly seeking veterinary assistance when needed are essential practices for ensuring your horse stays healthy and happy throughout the summer months. By being prepared and proactive, you can enjoy the season while keeping your horses safe from common summer emergencies.**

