



Isabelle Vets

# EQUINE NEWSLETTER

SPRING | MARCH 2025

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)

# CONTENTS

**pg.1**

## **OUR QUARTERLY UPDATE**

Keep in touch with our latest updates and news.

**pg.2&3**

## **READY...SET VACCINATE**

Protect your horse from equine influenza.

**pg.4&5**

## **SPRING GRAZING GUIDE**

Essential tips for keeping your horse healthy

**pg.6&7**

## **SPRING**

The perfect time for a soundness check-up for your horse.

**pg.8&9**

## **WHY YOU SHOULD ALWAYS HAVE A PRE-PURCHASE EXAMINATION BEFORE BUYING A HORSE**

A pre-purchase examination (PPE) performed by a qualified equine vet is an essential step to ensure you're making an informed decision.



# Our Quarterly Update

## Exciting news: Equine stocks now at Otterbourne Riding Stables!

Our new equine stocks have officially arrived at Otterbourne Riding Stables and they're already making a difference!

These state-of-the-art stocks have already been put to great use for dental extractions, gastroscopy and lameness investigations—helping us provide top-quality care with greater precision and safety.

Stay tuned for more updates on how they're enhancing our equine services!



Photo: Our Clinical Director, Sarah-Jane and Veterinary Nurse, Rhiannon

## Welcome back senior vet Mairi

Our equine team is thrilled to welcome back Senior Vet Mairi as she returns from maternity leave!

Sarah-Jane, Ashley, Ariadna, Freddie and Rowan are all looking forward to having her expertise and energy back in the team.



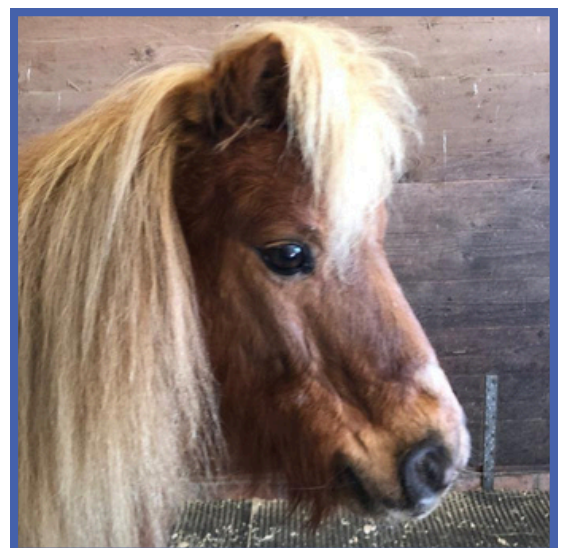
## Protect your horse from Sweet Itch this spring with Insol D

Sweet Itch can be a frustrating and uncomfortable condition for horses, but early prevention is key. Insol D is now in stock and available for horses prone to Sweet Itch. This targeted treatment consists of two injections, administered two weeks apart, ideally in early spring before the fly season begins. By starting treatment early, you can help reduce the risk of severe itching and discomfort, keeping your horse happy and healthy throughout the warmer months. Contact us today to learn more or to book your horse's treatment.



## Advanced tooth extraction for a Shetland Pony using MTE technique

Meet Barney, the Shetland pony who's made a great recovery after undergoing a cheek tooth extraction with our new MTE (Minimally Invasive Transbuccal Extraction) kit. The MTE kit allows us to perform these challenging extractions safely and efficiently while the patient is secured in the stocks. This advanced equipment is a recent and valuable addition to our practice.





## Ready...Set Vaccinate!

Protect your horse  
from equine influenza

Equine influenza is a highly contagious respiratory disease that spreads quickly among horses, ponies, and donkeys, especially in close-contact environments. Regular vaccination and biosecurity measures are essential to prevent outbreaks and protect your horse's health.

### What is Equine Influenza?

Equine influenza specifically targets the respiratory system and spreads through:

- Airborne particles: From coughing or sneezing horses
- Direct contact: Nose-to-nose interactions
- Contaminated surfaces: Grooming tools, feed buckets, or clothing
- Human transmission: Via hands, clothes, or equipment

While rarely fatal, it significantly impacts health and performance.

### Clinical Signs

- High temperature (102-106°F or 38.9-41.1°C)
- Persistent cough and nasal discharge
- Lethargy and loss of appetite
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Increased respiratory rate and muscle soreness

Recovery takes 2-3 weeks, with early detection and care being crucial.

## Vaccination: The Best Defence

Vaccination is the cornerstone of prevention, offering:

- Reduced risk of infection and severity
- Herd immunity to limit outbreaks
- Compliance with event and competition requirements

### Why vaccinate every six months?

- Immunity wanes over time
- Protects against evolving strains
- Ensures peak health and performance year-round

### Why retired horses still need to be vaccinated:

- Even horses that don't travel can contract influenza through indirect exposure
- Vaccination keeps them healthy and reduces the risk of severe illness



### Prevention Tips

- Vaccinate regularly as advised by your vet
- Quarantine new arrivals and isolate sick horses
- Maintain strict hygiene and biosecurity
- Ensure well-ventilated stables and monitor for signs of illness

*Contact us today to book your horse's flu vaccination appointment.*

*Protecting your horse has never been more straightforward!*



# Spring Grazing Guide

Essential tips  
for keeping your  
horse healthy

As the winter frost fades and the first signs of spring emerge, lush green pastures begin to flourish. While spring grass is a welcome sight, it also presents unique challenges and considerations for horse owners. Here's what you need to know to keep your horse healthy and happy as they transition to spring grazing.

## Why Is spring grass a concern?

Spring grass is rich in non-structural carbohydrates (NSCs), particularly fructans. These sugars are essential for plant growth but can pose health risks for horses, especially those prone to metabolic issues. The rapid growth of spring grass can lead to sudden dietary changes, potentially causing digestive disturbances and other health problems.

## Key risks associated with spring grass

- **Laminitis:** High levels of NSCs can trigger laminitis, a painful and potentially debilitating condition affecting the hooves. Horses with insulin resistance or equine metabolic syndrome are particularly vulnerable
- **Colic:** A sudden change in diet, such as increased access to rich spring grass, can upset the balance of the gut microbiome, leading to colic
- **Weight Gain:** For horses that are easy keepers, unrestricted grazing on nutrient-dense spring grass can lead to rapid weight gain, increasing the risk of obesity and associated health problems

## Tips for Managing Spring Grazing:

### Gradual introduction

To avoid digestive upset, introduce your horse to spring grass gradually and increase the duration over two to three weeks.

### Use grazing muzzles

For horses that are prone to overindulging or have a history of metabolic issues, grazing muzzles can help limit their intake while still allowing them to enjoy pasture time.

### Monitor pasture conditions

Spring grass is most concentrated in sugars during cool, sunny mornings and less so in the late evening. Adjust grazing times accordingly to reduce the risk of overload.

### Regular exercise

Maintaining a consistent exercise routine can help manage weight and reduce the risk of metabolic problems.



## Signs Your Horse May Be Struggling

Keep a close eye on your horse for warning signs, such as:

- Increased hoof sensitivity or lameness
- Changes in weight or body condition
- Behavioural changes, such as lethargy or agitation
- Digestive upset, including loose stools or signs of colic

If you notice any of these signs, consult your vet immediately.

Regular monitoring, blood work and dietary adjustments under veterinary guidance can help keep these horses safe during the spring grazing season.

Always consult your vet if you're unsure how to manage your horse's transition to spring grass.

Did you know?

Horses prone to conditions such as laminitis, PPID or insulin resistance require extra vigilance.

# Spring

## The perfect time for a soundness check-up for your horse

Now spring is here you're sure to be early anticipating more time in the saddle. However, before you dive into spring training or leisurely hacks, it's crucial to ensure your horse is fit and ready for the season ahead. Scheduling a soundness check-up with your vet is one of the best steps you can take to safeguard your horse's health and performance.

### Why spring is the ideal time for a check-up

- **Post-winter assessment:** Winter can be a challenging season for horses. Reduced exercise, icy or uneven footing, and changes in turnout routines can lead to stiffness, loss of condition, or unnoticed injuries. A spring soundness exam provides a comprehensive assessment to detect and address any lingering issues
- **Preparation for increased activity:** As spring arrives, many horses transition to a more active schedule. Whether your plans include competitions or pleasure riding, ensuring your horse is physically prepared reduces the risk of injury and improves performance
- **Monitoring chronic conditions:** For horses with existing conditions like arthritis or past injuries, spring is a pivotal time to evaluate their status. Your vet can recommend adjustments to their management, such as tailored exercise routines or supportive therapies, to keep them comfortable and active





## What to expect during a soundness check-up

A soundness check-up is a thorough evaluation of your horse's overall movement. Your vet may include the following:

- **Physical examination:** Checking for signs of pain, heat, or swelling in the limbs and joints
- **Movement evaluation:** Observing your horse at walk and trot, in hand or on the lunge, to detect any lameness or irregularities
- **Flexion tests:** To assess joint flexibility and identify areas of discomfort
- **Hoof health check:** Examining the hooves for signs of imbalance, cracks, or underlying issues that could compromise soundness
- **Additional diagnostics:** If needed, imaging techniques like X-rays or ultrasound can provide further insight into potential problems

## Benefits of a spring soundness check-up

- **Injury prevention:** Catching minor issues early can prevent them from escalating into more serious problems
- **Customised care plans:** Your vet can recommend a tailored exercise programme, or therapeutic interventions to support your horse's needs
- **Peace of mind:** Knowing your horse is sound and healthy allows you to move forward with confidence as you plan your spring and summer activities

## Partnering with your vet for a healthy spring

Your vet is an invaluable partner in keeping your horse at their best. A spring soundness check-up not only helps identify and address potential issues but also sets the stage for a successful and enjoyable season ahead. Be proactive and schedule your horse's exam today—because a sound horse is a happy horse!



# Why You Should Always Have a Pre-Purchase Examination

## *Before buying a horse*

Purchasing a horse is an exciting journey, whether you're acquiring your first equine partner or adding to your stable. However, this significant investment comes with responsibilities and potential risks. A pre-purchase examination (PPE) performed by a qualified equine vet is an essential step to ensure you're making an informed decision. Here's why a PPE is invaluable:

### Assessing the horse's health and soundness

Horses are remarkable athletes, but their performance and longevity depend heavily on their physical health.

A PPE provides a thorough evaluation of the horse's:

- **General health:** The vet will examine the horse's respiratory system, cardiovascular health, eyes, skin and more to identify any underlying issues
- **Soundness:** The vet will assess the horse's movement in hand, on a lunge line and under saddle (if applicable) to look for subtle signs of discomfort or lameness
- **Orthopaedic health:** Flexion tests and diagnostic imaging (e.g., X-rays or ultrasound scans) can help uncover potential joint or bone issues

### Uncovering hidden problems

Not all health issues are visible to the untrained eye. A PPE can reveal:

- **Chronic conditions:** Issues like arthritis or previous injuries that could impact the horse's performance
- **Dental problems:** These may affect the horse's ability to eat comfortably or work in a bit
- **Heart or lung abnormalities:** Subtle changes that might not affect the horse currently but could be problematic in the future

### Determining suitability for your needs

Every horse is unique and a PPE helps determine if the horse is suitable for your intended use. The vet's findings will help you understand the horse's capabilities and limitations, ensuring it aligns with your goals.

### Providing peace of mind

Buying a horse can be emotionally driven, but a PPE helps ensure your decision is based on facts. The examination gives you a clear picture of the horse's current state and potential future needs.

### Supporting negotiations

The findings from a PPE can inform price discussions. For instance, if the horse has a manageable condition that requires ongoing care, this could be factored into the purchase price. Similarly, a clean bill of health can reinforce your confidence in the investment.



### What's involved in a PPE?

A standard PPE typically includes:

- A thorough physical examination
- Assessment of movement and lameness testing
- Flexion tests to evaluate joint health
- Diagnostic imaging (if required)
- Blood is taken to be stored and tested for medications if necessary

The scope of the examination can be tailored to your specific needs and budget. Discussing your intentions with the vet beforehand ensures the PPE is aligned with your goals.

### Final Thoughts

While no examination can guarantee a horse will remain problem-free, a pre-purchase examination significantly reduces the risk of unexpected surprises. It equips you with the knowledge to make a confident, informed decision and fosters a positive start to your relationship with your new equine partner.

**If you're considering purchasing a horse, don't skip this crucial step.**

*Reach out to our equine veterinary team to schedule a pre-purchase examination and ensure your equine investment is a sound one.*