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Information on keeping horses fit and in work during the coldest and wettest weather



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SEADOWN
VETERINARY SERVICES

NEWSLETTER

Delivering first-class veterinary care to the New Forest since 1923

JANUARY 2022

HAPPY NEW YEAR.

We hope you all had a lovely Christmas and New Year.

The past year has been challenging for everyone. We would like to thank all of you for adapting with us. As we move forward into 2022 we are looking forward to working with you to keep your horses fit and well.

SAVE THE DATE!
WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 16TH 2022

PSSM is a muscle disease that can cause episodes of muscle stiffness and pain. It's most prevalent in breeds such as Quarter Horses, Appaloosas and warmbloods, but has been identified in other breeds too. Vet Laura Trigg BVSc Cert AVP(EP) MRCVS, of Seadown Veterinary Services in the New Forest, Hampshire, is kindly donating her time to present an online talk on the subject, explaining what horse owners and breeders should be aware of, how the owners of horses with PSSM can best manage them, and of course, busting some PSSM myths! Laura is one of two Honorary Veterinary Surgeons to the New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society (holders of the Stud Book of Origin for the breed) and, as type 1 PSSM was identified within the New Forest pony breed back in 2017, has been heavily involved with the disease as the breed society instigated a programme of genetic testing to identify affected bloodlines, cease breeding from affected stock and promote awareness amongst owners and breeders. This event will be live online. A recording will be made available to all ticket-holders for a seven day duration after the event, so if you cannot attend at the time simply buy your ticket and watch later.

Time: **7.30pm - 9pm**
www.bhs.org.uk/enjoy-riding/events-and-competitions/events/regional/south/2022/february/psm-polysaccharide-storage-myopathy-an-online-talk



Equine Client Evening

Wednesday 26th January
Online event @ 7.30pm.

Understanding your horses back with Gillian Higgins BSc BHS Senior coach, Dip(RM) MSM, ITEC(equine), MCAM, MIAS, MRAMP. To register follow the link below.

<https://cognitofirms.com/XLvets/xlvetsequinevirtua/clienteveningwed26thjan2022>

Point to Point Update

Once again due to covid-19 the 2021 New Forest point to point race was initially under debate as to whether it would run or not, however after debate it was approved and passed by NFPBCS and Forestry England. Seadown Director Laura Trigg and equine vet Hannah Buteux were the vets in attendance on the day. They were responsible for measuring the ponies before the races and responding to any accidents/injuries that may have been sustained during the fast paced and very competitive races. Given the nature of these races and the ground conditions it is lovely to report that no horses or riders sustained injury or needed veterinary assistance.

TO RUG OR NOT TO RUG???



Many of us can relate to the feeling that our horses are just too vulnerable to endure a 10°C drop leading us to wrap them up in cotton wool or the next best thing, a heavyweight turnout rug. With this in mind, here is some useful information to reassure you that sometimes your horse or pony is just as cosy, if not more comfortable, without his duvet.

Thermoregulation

Like humans, horses maintain their internal body temperature through a well-developed process called thermoregulation. Mature horses should ideally sustain a body temperature of around 38°C and, to avoid any health problems, it is crucial to ensure that there are no significant variations outside of this normal temperature range.

A horse's most resilient anorak.

Did you know that a horse's coat is its most prime insulator? Dependent on factors such as breed and age, the thickness and depth of a horse's coat can dramatically vary. The outer layer of hair on a horse's coat is protected by a cover of natural oils, which help to repel water to prevent their skin from becoming wet or cold. On this topic, be mindful to not over-groom your horse, as you risk removing the natural oils from their coat. If only it was as acceptable for us to get away with not washing our hair regularly!

So which horses need rugging?

We are often guilty of forgetting that for some horses, commonly natives, it is easier (and far less tolerable) for them to become too warm than it is for them to become too cold. In fact, a great way to help your good doer shed a few pounds is to not rug in colder weather to encourage them to use their energy/calories to keep warm. Of course we must be mindful that there will always be some horses that require a little more pampering in the form of a warm rug such as poor doers, seniors and clipped horses.

Checking your horse's body temperature... the right way!

Admittedly, most of us will take the approach of judging whether our horse is cold their softest (and our favourite) areas such as the ears or nose. However, horses will divert the blood flow and heat from the skin surface to their internal organs to preserve a core temperature. One of the best ways to assess the warmth of your horse is to slide your hand under their armpit, which may just become your new favourite glove! It will be an ongoing muse whether to rug or not to rug your horse, however, we ought to give more credit to these clever animals for being able to survive with, or without, the love and TLC of us devoted horse owners.

Winter Exercise for your Horse

Winter should not be a period when your horse has no exercise. In fact, it is important for their mental and physical well-being that they remain active in the colder months. This activity may not be as strenuous or extensive as it would be in a temperate time of year. However, you can safely exercise your horse in cold weather if you prepare it properly, do a reasonable level and amount of exercise, and care for it thoroughly afterwards.

Take your horse's condition into consideration. If considering taking your horse out in cold weather you need to take its current fitness level into consideration. Don't have expectations of it that it cannot physically fulfill. Remember that exercising in the winter can be more difficult for the horse, so rein in your expectations.

For example, if your horse does not exercise much during more temperate months, then expecting it to go on long rides in cold conditions will set you up for failure and possibly injury. Keep your horse's activity level the same or slightly lower when the weather starts getting colder.

Take time to get your horse use to cold temperatures. While horses can be acclimated to most temperatures, it can take some time. Get your horse used to the cold gradually. This means not throwing it out into freezing temperatures for long periods when it is not used to them.

This is especially true if you are relocating a horse that has never experienced freezing cold weather before. Give it some time and allow it to gradually get used to the cold before thoroughly exercising it.

Keep your horse's blanket or cooler (moisture-wicking wool or fleece covering) on it over your tack as you walk it to let the horse warm up slowly. Do not let the horse get sweaty under the blanket.

Allow your horse to properly warm up. One of the best ways to protect your horse from injury or illness due to exercise in cold weather is to properly warm it up. Warming up a horse allows its muscles to loosen up and more blood to flow into its joints.

Have your horse do 10-15 minutes of slow walking and stretching to allow its muscles to warm up. This can be a good time to do some easy training exercises.

If your horse has been standing in its stall for a long period of time, then it will need a long warm up period to get its muscles ready for exercise. A horse that has been turned out in a field all day, and thus has been moving around, will need less time.

Before getting on your horse to work out, warm up your horse's neck and chest by doing some carrot stretches. While using carrots as a lure, have the horse do three different motions, including:

Rounding (flexion)

Hollowing (extension)

Side to side (lateral) bending

Staff spotlight

DANNI COLE.

After more than 10 years working at Seadown, Danni has decided to follow a new career path and will be leaving us imminently to head onto her new venture. Danni started at Seadown as a kennel hand and then went through her VN training whilst here with us and it has been a pleasure to watch her grow and become the excellent VN she is today. Danni has been a dedicated and consistent member of both the Large and Small animal teams, she has worked with many of your beloved horses over the years. We will all miss her greatly but wish her the very best in her new job.

VICKY FOOT

Vicky joined our equine team in August 2021 as an equine assistant. Vicky has many years' experience working with horses of all backgrounds. She will be assisting out vets and nurses with visits, in house procedures and stable care of any horses we have in at Seadown for routine or more complex treatment. I am sure you will meet her over the coming months.

Next Issue:

We will be sharing some lovely news stories from our equine team on some weird and wonderful cases that have been treated here at Seadown.

Seadown equine is not all horse play

Some of you may not be aware that as well as our equine companions, here at Seadown we see a variety of larger species. We have recently treated Alpacas, Reindeer, Donkeys, and Goats, sheep, pigs and even Geese. Although we no longer attend work on farms we definitely get to see a wide range of small holding pets. More stories to come on these in the future!!



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