

# Dukes Veterinary Practice

Dykehead Farm

Aboyne

Aberdeenshire

AB34 5JH

## Newsletter

April 2007

### Open day

We are holding an open day on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May at Dykehead from 1pm to 5pm. There will be talks or demonstrations on diagnostic imaging, dentistry, plus scanning of both non-pregnant and pregnant mares. We will be discussing equine embryo transfer and AI. There will be a display by Noble Shot, our thoroughbred stallion, and Jim and his sons will be riding some of Noble Shot's progeny.

Pauline Kidd will be demonstrating Rolfing for horses and will have her Pilates toys out for everyone to play on! Lorna Jowett from Bailey's horse feeds will be talking on "Feeding pregnant mares and youngstock" plus is available for general nutritional advice. Whilst she is here, Lorna is available for a free visit to your yard to discuss feeding. If you are interested please ring the office in the next couple of weeks and we will put you in touch with her.

If you would like to put up a poster in your yard to advertise the day, please ring Linda.

### An end to routine Brucellosis testing

DEFRA have announced that there will be no more routine Brucellosis testing from 9<sup>th</sup> April this year. This will be good news for farmers as, unless they are under restrictions or a new herd, they will now only have to have a full herd test every four years for TB only. Whilst this will undoubtedly save the government money in the short term, it does increase the risk of an outbreak of brucellosis going undetected. It is now more important than ever that you contact us about any abortions, stillbirths or premature calvings of less than 270 days gestation in the herd. The ministry still pays for this visit and there is no longer a requirement to place the cow in isolation until the results are known.


### Injuries in dressage horses

The Animal Health Trust has produced a preliminary report following a survey of risk factors for injury in dressage horses. There are some quite enlightening points; variety is good for horses; hacking, jumping and turnout in addition to dressage all reduced the risks of injuries. Another major factor was the surfaces the horses worked on – arenas without a base or patchy or uneven surfaces or those that became deeper in wet weather all increased the risk of injury; however working horses on consistently good surfaces had positive protective benefits.

Maybe none of this is that surprising but it does back up our belief that its good to let horses be horses, and that there's no point spending a lot of money on a horse and then working it repetitively on a second rate surface. Interestingly enough horses with respiratory problems

Equine and Farm Animal Practice

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Director Jim Dukes BVM&S, MRCVS

were also more prone to injury backing up the importance of a holistic approach to injuries. Bigger horses were also more injury prone.

## Navel clamps for calves

We now stock small plastic clips for clamping calf navels. If these are applied shortly after birth along with dipping the navels they will minimise the risk of calves contracting joint ill later on. So far most farmers who have tried them have ordered more, so they seem to be happy with the results.

## Flu Vaccinations

Some of you may have read about a vet who might be struck off for putting the wrong date on a passport for a flu vaccination. Whilst we do our best to advise you when we believe your horse's vaccinations are due, **it is your responsibility to check and book the vaccinations on time.** We will not be responsible for having to restart a vaccination course or for you being unable to compete if you book the vaccination late.

## Embryo transfer recipients

We are looking for a few mares for embryo transfer recipients. To be suitable they ideally need to be between 3 and 8 years of age, between 14.2 and 16.2, reasonably sensible to handle and fit and healthy. However, they can have injuries or other problems that prevent them being ridden. Contact Jim for further information.

## Neutraceuticals

We live in an age where instant fixes are expected. Rather than spend time finding out what's wrong with our horse, we can go to a shop or the internet and buy a tub of powder guaranteed to fix just about any problem you can think of. This has made some companies very rich but may not have changed the lives of many equines.

Some of the claims are so outlandish that they are almost impossible to test, but an area which has received considerable research is joint supplements. There are conflicting reports with some studies showing some benefit and others showing none. Considering how expensive these supplements are it would be useful to know that they were doing some good. In one recent study some products had none of the active ingredients in that they claimed to contain!!! Caveat emptor.

In many cases conventional treatments are likely to be more effective and often cheaper. We do occasionally suggest supplements, but only for specific cases and only use supplements with controlled trial data to back up their efficacy and with guaranteed the levels of active ingredients.


## Mike Barker

Mike, the natural horseman from Tasmania will be back with us this summer for a couple of weeks. Mike is great at dealing with difficult horses and also very good at encouraging people to work well with their horse. For many people working with Mike has been a revelation, vastly improving their understanding and relationship with their horse. For information contact Lynn at the practice or e mail [lynnndukes@hotmail.com](mailto:lynnndukes@hotmail.com)

**If you would like to receive our newsletters by e-mail, please send an e-mail to [linda@dukesvets.com](mailto:linda@dukesvets.com) or telephone 013398 87010**

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