

Dukes Veterinary Practice

Dykehead Farm

Aboyne

Aberdeenshire

AB34 5JH

Newsletter August 2006

It's not often that Mark complains about being too hot but even he started to notice that it was pleasantly warm in July! It could also have something to do with the fact that he's been working longer hours and doing more on call since Jim broke his foot in mid June and has been unable to drive. However, Jim is now finally out of plaster and driving again which makes it easier for everyone! We are all extremely grateful to Mark for his help and dedication during this period – he is a hero!!

Talking of perpetual summers, Mark is taking a break this winter and returning to South Africa for 6 months at the end of August. He is planning to return however once the worst of the winter has passed and we are then planning to expand to three vets.

Welcome Anja

We are being joined by a new vet, Dr Anja Rosenbrock, at the beginning of September. Anja is from a stock farming family and qualified in 2001 in Hannover. She has worked in mixed and equine practice since qualifying and is coming to us from a summer stud season in Ireland. We are looking forward to her joining the team.

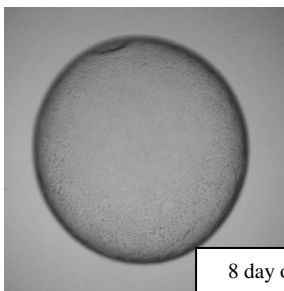
Mike Barker

We had a really good time when Mike and Sarah visited during the summer. Many of you will have seen Mike at one of his clinics or had some individual help with novice or difficult horses. For those of you who missed him this time he will be back again next Summer and, with a bit of persuasion, may stay a little longer in Scotland.

Cattle Lung worm warning

Lung worm has been on the increase across Scotland in recent years and, although we have had some suspect cases, nothing as dramatic as a five year old cow Jim saw recently. According to the text books lungworm usually occurs in young cattle in their first or second grazing seasons and older cattle should be immune. However this animal clearly had no immunity. The farmer saw her at 8.00 in the morning and she was fine, by lunchtime she was showing signs of severe respiratory distress and despite attempts to help her she died by 8.00 that evening. On post mortem large numbers of lungworm were seen in her trachea effectively blocking her windpipe!! Usually some animals will be seen coughing first but in this case this was the first animal noted with any symptoms. The rest of the cattle have been wormed and we hope there will be no further cases.

If you have noticed animals coughing or seen any other signs of pneumonia at pasture, lungworm should be considered even in older animals. Lungworm can be treated with various wormers but it is important to get the strategy right. If you would like any advice please phone Jim at the practice. We have a special offer on at the moment on an ivermectin pour on – ask Linda for details.



8 day old equine embryo ½ mm diam

The smallest horse you've ever seen!

We have been experimenting with embryo transfer this summer. We have been very successful at harvesting embryos and have been trialling different transfer methods. We hope we now have a good system and will be offering the service next year if you are interested. As far as we know we are the only

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practice in Scotland offering the service which is particularly suitable for young mares that are still actively competing. Ask Jim for further details.

Free Nutritional Advice!

We are having a visit at the end of the month from Lorna Jowett of Bailey's horse feeds. She is going to look at our grazing management and take pasture samples for analysis for nutrients and trace elements. This is a free service provided by Bailey's and if anyone is interested we could put you in touch with Lorna.

Unusual case

However long you've been working with horses, there is still something new around the corner. The same is true for vets and Mark was unable to make an instant diagnosis when he was called out to see a horse that was staggering, falling over, showing colic signs and refluxing from her nostrils. Initially Mark suspected grass sickness but not all the signs fitted, particularly an extremely slow pulse – normal 40, her pulse was 14 beats per minute. She was in shock. We suspected some sort of poisoning and gave her intensive supportive therapy.

On inspection we found some foxgloves had been nibbled in the field. Foxglove contains a drug called digitalis which is sometimes used to treat heart conditions. As well as increasing contractility of the heart muscle it slows the heart down. Cases of poisoning are rare as the plant is unpalatable but we believe this was the cause in this mare, which has gone on to make a full recovery.

Herd Health Plans

Farmers that selected any of these options as part of their land management contracts should be aware that the deadline for completion of the plan is only two months away. Now is a good time to start in order to ensure they can be completed on time.

Farmers receive a payment for this from the Scottish Executive. Although there is no such payment for horse owners, anyone wishing to review their horse herd health program may still find the service useful. Contact Jim or Anja if you'd like to discuss this.

Individual horse health check

This winter we will be offering individual horse health checks. This will review your preventative health program combined with a comprehensive examination of your horse. This is more applicable to owners with one or two horses. Contact Linda if you wish to arrange an appointment.

Well done Steffi

Steffi was a new patient to us this spring. For the past few years she has had difficulty eating and keeping weight on but has always been a willing horse. She had been having her teeth rasped regularly but this was only giving temporary respite.

When Jim examined her for the first time he noticed her two lower back molars were displaced medially and therefore were not being worn down. This was causing trauma to the back of her tongue and roof of her mouth. We scheduled an appointment to remove the molars and rasped the remainder of her teeth. Jim has subsequently been back to rasp her teeth again to learn that due to her improved appetite Steffi had put on weight, was now eating "normal" food, had won best condition at her last endurance ride and been selected for the Scottish team! Not only that, but the team won their section and also the best condition prize again. The only down side was that her owner had to buy a new saddle!

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