



newsletter

Equine metabolic syndrome



Some horses are fatter than others! This horse is highly likely to be suffering from EMS

Equine Metabolic Syndrome (EMS) is a recently recognised condition that describes a collection of clinical signs that increase a horse's susceptibility to laminitis. The condition is thought to be a similar disease to Type-2 Diabetes found in obese people.

Horses suffering from EMS have excess fat deposits especially in the neck (cresty necks), shoulders and around the tail head. This excess fat produces various hormones including adipokines. These adipokines decrease the body's sensitivity to insulin leading to insulin resistance. A horse with insulin resistance is unable to regulate their body's blood sugar (glucose) and this leads to high circulating levels of glucose. It is thought that excess glucose (along with other factors) can predispose a horse to laminitis.

Obesity is becoming a common problem in the general horse population, especially in native breed ponies. These ponies evolved a highly efficient metabolic system. Due to the ready access most ponies have to good quality forage all-year-round and the feeding of concentrates their bodies lay down far too much fat leading to clinical obesity. EMS is defined as an obese horse with insulin resistance who is suffering (even at a sub-clinical level) from laminitis. The disease is diagnosed by a physical examination confirming obesity and a blood sample indicating insulin resistance. In most cases a single blood sample can be taken following overnight starvation. It must be noted that not all horses with EMS will have an elevated insulin level in this blood sample. If we are still concerned that EMS is a possible explanation for your horse's laminitis we can take further tests including monitoring the body's response to being given glucose intravenously and by measuring other hormones.

The cornerstones of treating EMS are weight loss and increased exercise. Weight loss can be very difficult to achieve but with a strict diet and patience all horses can lose weight. Obese horses are placed on a hay only diet (with some mineral supplementation) with no access to grass. The hay should be fed at 1.5% of the horses desired body weight (not their actual body weight!). This diet is maintained until the desired body weight is achieved. Exercise helps to reduce weight and increases the body's sensitivity to insulin. Horses should be exercised for a minimum of 20 minutes moderate exercise 3 times a week. If more exercise can be achieved so much the better.

Metformin is a drug that can also be helpful before significant weight loss is achieved. Metformin increases the body's sensitivity to insulin helping counteract the negative affects of the adipokines.



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Horse Health Plans

Our Horse Health Plans are an excellent way to monitor your horse's health and can be undertaken in conjunction with vaccinations. We believe that these detailed health plans are an enormous step in the right direction and aim to offer a simple way for you to ensure the very best preventative healthcare for your horse.

There are three plans to choose from, you have the choice of simply keeping your horses dentistry and vaccinations up to date or going further and having a more comprehensive health assessment with a full blood screen.

BRONZE

- Annual visit
- Annual vaccination
- Annual dental examination and tooth rasp
- Annual full clinical examination

£9.75 per month
£117 per year

SILVER

- Annual visit
- Annual vaccination
- Annual dental examination and tooth rasp
- Annual full clinical examination
- Worm egg counts for the year
- Annual blood test for tapeworm
- Annual blood count

£14.25 per month
£171 per year

GOLD

- Annual visit
- Annual vaccination
- Annual dental examination and tooth rasp
- Annual full clinical examination
- Worm egg counts for the year
- Annual blood test for tapeworm
- Annual blood count
- Annual blood biochemistry screen
- Wormer pack for the year *

£18.75 per month
£225 per year

* Contains any necessary wormers up to 600kg dose.

We're always happy to help

If you have any queries regarding any issue raised in this newsletter or have any other questions about your horse's health please don't hesitate to contact the team on:

t: 01342 823011
f: 01342 824342
e: vets@priorsfarm.co.uk
w: www.priorsfarm.co.uk

If you missed the last newsletter it is available to view online along with a host of other information.



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newsletter

AUTUMN 2010

Hospital status for Priors Farm

Proud to achieve the highest level of accreditation.

We have recently been awarded Equine Hospital status under the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Practice Standards Scheme, one of only 24 in the UK. Joining the Practice Standards Scheme is a commitment to providing the highest standards of veterinary care, monitored by regular spot checks by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS). The Scheme consists of three tiers that are awarded based on the facilities offered by the practice, the expertise of its employees and its adherence to strict health and safety, hygiene and legal requirements. We obtained tier 2 (equine practice status) in 2007 but after a lot of hard work by the team have now gone on to achieve the highest level of accreditation (Tier 3) becoming an RCVS accredited Veterinary Hospital. In addition the hospital continues as a British Equine Veterinary Association approved AI centre. Please see the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons website www.RCVS.org.uk for further information.

Put this in your Diary

We are delighted to announce the internationally renowned equine nutritionist, Dr Teresa Hollands from Dodson&Horrell will be speaking at Priors Farm at 7.30 pm on 16th November under the heading "Does it matter if my horse is comfortably cuddly?" - reviewing the dangers and how to tackle equine obesity. Ben will then cover the anatomy of the equine digestive system with a live dissection and 3D computer generated graphics to further explain its position in the horse. Drinks and nibbles will be served. Please phone the office on 01342 823011 to reserve your free ticket. A collection for Sussex Horse Rescue will be made during the evening.

7.30 pm Tuesday 16th November

