



## ESPINAR EQUINE

### Autumn 2020

#### Welcome to our Autumn 2020 Newsletter!

Even though we have now passed the longest day, with the delay resulting from lockdown, for many of us our thoughts are turning towards a belated summer getaway! Luckily the weather has been quite warm but looks like that is not going to continue for some time with the inevitable onset of some autumn-related issues that our horses are prone to. However, if you want to be prepared, it's always good to look ahead and make plans.

#### LAMENESS EXAMINATIONS

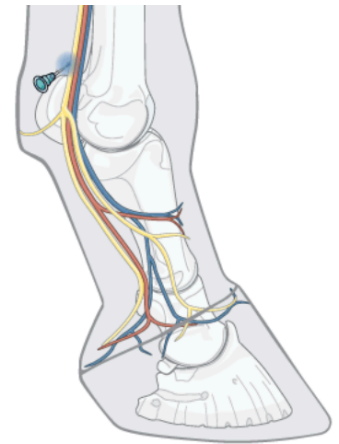
One of Emiliano's interest areas is in lameness and poor performance investigations. As well as a thorough clinical examination, observation of the horse at rest and in motion, and flexion tests, one of the diagnostic techniques used to locate the source of a lameness are nerve blocks.

Nerve blocks involve an injection of local anaesthetic into a sensory nerve, which numbs the pain-receiving signal to the brain. If the horse trots sound, the nerve block is said to be positive (meaning it has isolated the lameness to the area that has been blocked). If the nerve block is negative (the horse is still lame) then further nerve blocks may be performed, usually moving from the lower part of the leg upwards. In some cases, blocking one leg may mean that the lameness 'switches' - so the horse is then lame on the other leg. This could indicate that the horse is actually bilaterally lame (lame in both legs) but the more obvious lameness was hiding the more subtle lameness in the other leg!

Further investigation may be needed to determine exactly what structures are involved and this is where x-rays or ultrasound would be used to look at bone or soft tissue changes. As well as the nerve blocks, these can all be performed at your yard.

After having a nerve block, your horse will need to stay in for four hours as a precaution, because it is no longer able to feel part of the leg, and so needs to stay relatively quiet until it wears off, instead of galloping around a field!

As some areas may not be clearly visible on x-ray or ultrasound, such as hoof or lower back, if necessary your horse can also then be referred for an MRI or a bone scan. We can arrange the referral process, and afterwards, look at formulating a plan of action based on any findings to help rehabilitate your horse.



## AUTUMN - TEST FOR PPID

Cushing's is an ageing disease that affects the hypothalamus and ultimately the pituitary gland becoming enlarged; it produces too much adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH). High levels of ACTH result in the adrenal glands over producing cortisol. This can lead to the clinical signs of Equine Pituitary Pars Intermedia Dysfunction (PPID) or Cushing's Disease (one of which is a decrease of sensitivity to insulin). This in turn can lead to laminitis!

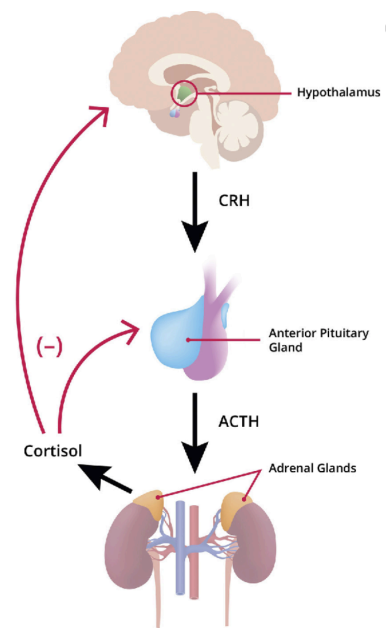
Even healthy horses experience an increase in ACTH levels in the autumn and this is why laboratory test results are 'seasonally adjusted' (the cut-off rates are changed to take into account



the increase in 'normal' levels). However if your horse suffers from bouts of 'foot soreness' at this time of year, it may not just be the hard ground that is responsible. Getting your horse tested for PPID could enable you to start treatment with Prascend and manage the onset of any symptoms during the early stages of Cushing's.

If your horse is relatively young, struggles to lose weight even under strict management and also has foot soreness or recurrent laminitis episodes, the metabolic disorder EMS (Equine Metabolic Syndrome) could be responsible. This also causes a decrease in insulin sensitivity and predisposition to laminitis. The signs may vary for both conditions but they are treated differently so it is always worth having a blood test done to properly diagnose what is occurring.

Remember that the last flushes of hot weather and some cooler showers can encourage a flush of grass growth, so be on the lookout for signs of laminitis anyway!



## ABSCESSES

Hooves that have been dry and hard during the summer months can be prone to abscesses, and as the ground starts to soften with the cooler nights, they can become more common. Your horse may be non-weight bearing and have a bounding digital pulse. To relieve the pressure, vets may cut out the track of the abscess to remove the seat of infection and allow any pus to drain. Applying a poultice and giving painkillers is the next step.



## WORMING

Also, don't forget your worming schedule! We advise to follow an intelligent worming programme, as it helps minimise the risk to the horse's health from worms, and also prevents drug-resistance. For horses that are living on pastures that are 'poo-picked', we do a faecal worm egg count and then based on those results, we can advise on which wormer to use and when. This means you won't be worming unnecessarily, you'll be using the right type of wormer based on your horse's requirements and so its more effective for both health and cost in the long run!

Good pasture management is key and autumn is a good time to treat for tapeworm. Neither tapeworm or encysted small red worm can be detected by a faecal worm egg count, (although there is a saliva test that can be done to determine tapeworm burden). Therefore a wormer for this should be given at least once a year anyway even if a worm egg count comes back negative. Praziquantel or pyrantel will treat tapeworm (double dose of Strongid P or Pyratape P, or you can use Eqvalan Duo or Equest Pramox).

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## LIPOGEMS

As we build a long-term relationship with clients and their horses, it is always interesting to follow horses throughout their careers. This includes through any periods of illness or injury; from investigating and diagnosing the issue, to formulating a suitable treatment and rehabilitation programme.



One of the regenerative treatments that we offer is Lipogems. We feel that these could be more advantageous in certain cases over other regenerative therapies. This also makes it suitable for use in competition animals and without the side effects of steroid injections. This procedure is used in human medicine with reported success. The procedure can be performed at your yard.

If you would like to discuss whether Lipogem procedure and treatment would be a suitable option for your horse, please get in touch.

As we start to wind down towards the end of the year, we hope that you've all had a good summer. This autumn things may be vastly different from last year with cancelled competitions or socially distanced shows, but the usual equine care still needs to be done routinely as normal. We are able to do all visits, just still keeping distance. Hopefully we can all be prepared going into winter and look forwards to the closing chapter of 2020!

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