

# Dukes Vet Practice

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## Newsletter January 2011

### Practice talk raises £751.68 towards Equine Grass Sickness Research

### Practice Survey

Thank you to everyone who took part in our client survey. We have received some very useful feedback which we greatly appreciate. We have listened to your comments and will do our best to continue to improve and expand the service we offer. A summary of the survey and comments is available on our website. If you have not already completed the survey you can still send it in as we are interested in all your comments.

The majority of responses were extremely positive. 98 % of respondents said they are happy or very happy with the service we provide and the same percentage would definitely recommend our practice to prospective new clients, and many have already done so. Thank you all for your support.

Congratulations to Susan Deans, the winner of the draw for a £30 gift voucher.

### Gastric ulcers – a common problem?

Gastric ulcers may occur in up to 70% of racehorses in training and a significant percentage of other breeds too! Because the signs are not obvious in some cases, they can go undetected throughout the horse's life and yet may be a significant cause of poor performance or behavioural problems.

(Cont over)



The effects of grass sickness can be horrific. The horse in the picture above first showed symptoms of the disease in Summer 2008 and within two months looked like this. He has some classical features of chronic grass sickness such as an extreme weight loss, tucked up abdomen with his hind legs under him and an abnormally shiny coat.

At this stage we began to doubt if we had done the right thing by treating him, but with continued supportive treatment and terrific support and nursing from his owners this horse has made a fantastic recovery. However many horses are not so lucky and our hearts always sink when we suspect grass sickness in any case we see.

In November we were delighted to welcome Prof Bruce McGorum from the Dick Vet in Edinburgh to give us a talk on the latest findings in grass sickness research.

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## Gastric ulcers (Cont)

Horses with gastric ulcers display a wide range of symptoms including poor condition despite feeding, eating food slowly or leaving some hard feed, grumpy when approached or tacking up and bucking or resisting in some cases. Whilst there can be many other reasons we would always consider ulcers as a possibility.

Often these horses can be treated very successfully. A definitive diagnosis is only possible by gastroscopy. We had a specialist visit last summer and looked at a number of horses, all of whom had some degree of ulceration. We are planning on a further session if we have enough cases and if you are concerned your horse may have an ulcer, ring one of the vets for a chat.

## Snow, Snow and yet more snow!!!



The recent early cold-snap had a significant impact on all our equine activities. It always surprises me how well horses cope with the cold conditions. As long as they have reasonable shelter, a waterproof rug if they are thin coated, an ad lib supply of good quality roughage and plenty of fresh water to drink most horses cope well outside.

If horses are losing weight it may be because they have a problem that could be easily solved. Hay and feed are too expensive to waste so make sure you get your horse checked out if he or she is not thriving.

The snowy weather has made getting about difficult for the vets too but with Mark living near Aberdeen and Jim and Jeanette in Aboyne it's meant we can cover the area regardless of the weather.

## Grass sickness (Cont)

This was followed by an informative talk by Lorna Edgar from Baileys Horse feeds. The talk was organised by Mark Moseley and we would like to thank Baileys Horse Feeds and Norbrook for helping to sponsor the evening. We were also delighted to welcome members of Grampian BHS and will be holding another combined meeting with them in the spring.

We had an excellent audience and are grateful for their generous donations to the EGS fund; in particular we would like to thank Sally McCarthy and Aberdeen Riding Club who gave a significant contribution towards the total.

## Online payment facility

After a considerable delay this month we should have a facility for you to pay your accounts online via the website. We also have started a practice shop for wormers, first aid equipment and other essentials. There is a good selection of foaling, lambing and calving kit. The products are priced competitively such as Powerflex bandages £3.00 inc VAT and Cosequin 400g £59.97. We also stock a range of "Parelli style" rope halters and will feature more products if popular.

We have revised all prices for 2011 which will result in an overall increase broadly inline with the retail price index. We have kept our equine visit charge the same despite the increased fuel costs.

## Mares wanted to use as embryo transfer recipients

We are looking for a few mares to use as recipients in our embryo transfer program. Ideally between about 15.3 and 16.2 and 3 – 8 yrs old. They will not be ridden but must be manageable and paddock sound. Conformation or type is not particularly important.

## Thinking of breeding from your mare this year?

Find more information in our 2011 Stud Newsletter and pricelist. If you would like a copy you can download it online or contact the office.

Jim is also doing a talk for Grampian BHS on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March covering current and futuristic breeding technologies including IVF, ICSE and cloning! Cabin Equestrian Centre 7.30pm.