

# Damory Veterinary Clinic

## Equine Newsletter

### Damory Veterinary Clinic

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### Laminitis Warning

The warm Summer weather has been good for growing grass. It is no surprise that most horses and particularly ponies are in good body condition at the moment. As a result we have seen a recent increase in the number of cases of laminitis.

The **Talk About Laminitis: TAL** campaign has returned. Until the end of October 2015 the laboratory costs of testing for Cushing's disease (one important underlying cause of laminitis) is free. There are some changes too. **Care and Connect** is a new

interactive online service that is available for owners of horses diagnosed with Cushing's disease. Visit the TAL website for more information:

[www.talkaboutlaminitis.co.uk](http://www.talkaboutlaminitis.co.uk)

### Equine Influenza In Dorset

At the end of June an unvaccinated horse in Dorset with signs of respiratory disease tested positive for equine influenza on samples taken and sent to the Animal Health Trust. Two other in contact

horses showed similar signs and have been isolated. There have been no further positively diagnosed outbreaks in Dorset since then.

The take home message is: Equine 'flu is still cir-

culating in the UK equine population. Vaccination is not simply something we have to do to be allowed to compete. It is an important part of prevention of this nasty disease.

### When is sunburn not sunburn?

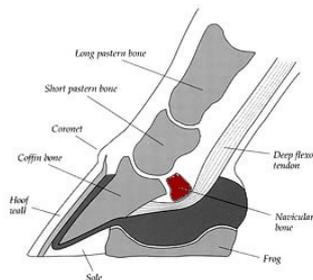
Horses with unpigmented (pink) skin, especially around the muzzle and face are prone to classic sunburn caused by UV radiation in sunlight. Occasionally there is an

underlying trigger that makes horses more sensitive to UV light. We have treated a number of cases where patients have suffered from sunburn that has been trig-

gered by an underlying liver problem. Keep your horse protected with sunblock this summer (we recommend *Ozvet*) but contact us if it's not working.

## Disease Facts: Navicular Syndrome

Navicular Syndrome (or Navicular disease) is a degenerative condition of structures in the horse's heels in the forelegs. The navicular bone is a small bone (red in diagram below) located at the back of the heel. The deep digital flexor tendon runs down the leg, wraps under the navicular bone and attaches to the pedal bone.



Pain arises from the bones, tendons, ligaments and bursa (the fluid-filled sac around the navicular bone) in this area. The main sign of navicular syndrome is lameness in the front feet. This can occasionally be sudden severe lameness but more commonly it is low grade and chronic.

Horses often avoid loading their heels by landing flat footed or toe-first – often with a stiff, short-striding gait. Owners often report a loss of action, stiffness, unwillingness to jump

and an inability to lengthen stride. Clinical signs are often first noticed at approximately 7 to 9 years of age, though this can vary.

Diagnosis usually relies on nerve blocks to localise the area of pain to the navicular bursa. This involves the vet injecting local anaesthetic in specific sights to temporarily numb the area. Once the navicular bursa has been confirmed as the source of the problem, radiographs of the feet will be taken to look at the navicular bone from different angles.

MRI scanning of the feet gives the most accurate images of the navicular bursa and the associated soft tissues, and may be necessary for a definitive diagnosis.



Occasionally ultrasound scans can be carried out but the hoof wall prevents accurate images

of some areas of the foot. Nuclear scintigraphy (bone scan) can occasionally be carried out to aid diagnosis but is usually not necessary.

Treatment is aimed at managing the condition to regain soundness. A cure is rarely achieved. Some horses sadly remain lame and need to reduce their workload.

One of the most important aspects of management is corrective farriery. The type of trimming and shoeing will vary according to an individual's conformation and x-rays.



Other therapies include anti-inflammatories orally or injected into the navicular bursa. Also a class of drugs called bisphosphonates (Equidronate or Osphos) can be administered to slow down destructive bone changes.

Congratulations to Gemma and Adrian Falck. Gemma gave birth to Charlie earlier this year. Mum and little boy are both doing well.