



## Damory Veterinary Clinic

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## Special points of interest in this issue:

- An invitation to our forthcoming client evening
- Introducing the National Equine Database
- Facts about Tying-Up

## Also included in this issue:

- Update on horse passport legislation changes
- A laminitis warning

Volume 4, Issue 2

April 2009

## An invitation to our Spring client meeting

Our last client evening in November was very well received and it was good to see so many people. A Spring evening meeting has been planned for **Tuesday 21st April**.

There will be several presentations:

### Equine Dentistry-Part 2

Simon Howarth will continue the series on modern equine dentistry and focus on some

of the treatments currently available for various problems affecting the teeth.

### 'All you need to know about sarcoids'

Julian Radburn will give an illustrated talk about this very common but sometimes frustrating skin condition.

Once again we shall meet at the Sealey Suite of the Crown hotel in Blandford Forum at 7.30pm.

Everyone is welcome and admission is free. Light refreshments will be provided, or there is a bar for those wishing to purchase something stronger!

We do hope you can join us and look forward to seeing as many people as possible.

If you are interested and planning to join us, please contact Gladys at the surgery to reserve a place and get directions.

Are you on NED?  
click here to search...



## National Equine Database

The National Equine Database (NED) has been in existence since 2006 but in November 2008 became accessible to the public. It is a partnership between DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and the horse industry. It is essentially a central bank of information about the UK horse population.

Every horse born or resident

in the UK with a horse passport is on the database. The UK Passport Issuing Organisations have provided details such as name, age, sex, height and colour. In some cases, details of the sire and dam are also available.

Additionally owners are encouraged to upload freeze marks and micro-chip numbers to the website.

The information on the database can be accessed free of charge at:

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

The website can be used to:

- View details of any horse with a UK passport;
- Check pedigrees;
- Trace missing horses via freeze marks and micro-chips;
- Follow the performance of some sport horses; and
- Check the validity of a passport when buying a horse.

Have a look when you are online and your horse should be there!

## Disease facts: Tying-up



Tying-up is a painful condition caused by inflammation and damage to muscles. It is also known as *set-fast*, *azoturia*, *rhabdomyolysis*, or *Monday morning syndrome!*

Usually the muscles of the back and rump are affected causing a 'tied up' horse to walk with a very stiff or stilted gait. In severe cases horses may be reluctant to move, distressed and sweating.



There are broadly three causes:

1. **Over-exercise:** If an unfit horse does too much fast or hard work it may suffer a strain injury.
2. **Diet** with excessive levels of carbohydrates: This particularly affects young

(female) thoroughbreds  
3. **Polysaccharide storage myopathy (PSM):** Muscle damage is caused by a horse's genetic tendency to store abnormal sugars in the muscle cells.

Treatment involves anti-inflammatory painkillers and rest. This should initially be in a stable whilst sore, then in a small (eg.20x20m) turnout paddock.

There is an invaluable blood test that will detect muscle damage. It measures the levels of two chemicals (the enzymes AST and CK) that are released into the bloodstream following muscle damage. The test will confirm a case of tying-up, and help decide when a horse's

muscles have healed and it can start ridden work again.

Diet plays a key role in helping to prevent another episode. The specific requirements depend on the underlying cause, but in general the proportions of concentrates should be restricted whilst those of fibre and fat increased. A home prepared ration can be formulated using alfalfa mixes, hay and vegetable oil. A variety of commercial feeds are also available (such as ERS from Dodson and Horrell).

Recurring episodes of tying-up may require further investigation. Electrolyte levels can be assessed or a muscle biopsy taken to diagnose PSM.

## Clarification on new horse passport legislation



We have already highlighted probable changes to EU legislation governing horse passports that are planned to come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009. DEFRA is currently reviewing the results of its public consultation and will publish specific proposals in early May.

However it is worth stressing that the insertion of a microchip (by a veterinary surgeon) should **only be compulsory when applying for a new passport** after 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009. It will also be compulsory to microchip all foals born after this date.

We have been advised by DEFRA that **if you already have a passport** for your horse (and legally you should) **it will not be compulsory** for you to have your horse micro chipped; although this offers many benefits.

## Keep an eye on that grass!



Now that the snow is a distant memory and Spring is upon us, do keep an eye on the grass.

With the warmer weather the grass will be growing more rapidly and contain higher levels of sugars.

Do take action early to avoid laminitis by using electric fencing to strip graze and limit access to rich grass. By moving the fence only a foot or so each day will reduce the consumption of dangerous sugars.

Remember that overweight horses and ponies are up to ten times more likely to suffer from laminitis. So it is particularly important that they are slim at this time of year.

Remember: 'fit not fat.'