

ISLE VALLEY EQUINE CLINIC

The Equine Sarcoid

By visiting specialist **Jeremy Kemp-Symonds, BA (Hons), BSc (Hons), MSc, BVMS, MRCVS**

WHAT ARE SARCOIDS?

Sarcoids are skin tumours that can affect any breed of horse and pony. There is strong evidence to suggest that sarcoids are caused by a cattle virus, which belongs to the same family of viruses that is known to induce cancer in other species (such as cervical cancer in humans). Sarcoids are often locally aggressive and can occur at numerous sites on affected animals.

WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

Sarcoids are the most frequently-encountered form of equine cancer (representing over 30% of equine cancer cases in most studies). They are unsightly, can achieve a considerable size and may interfere with tack, rendering affected animals unable to work. When ulcerated, they are an obvious cause of discomfort; this is exacerbated in the warmer months by the irritation caused by flies that gather to feed on the exudate. Hence, sarcoids are not only responsible for failures at pre-purchase examinations, but are also the most common skin-related cause of euthanasia.



HOW DO I RECOGNISE THEM?

There are six types of sarcoids:

Nodular: Discrete, firm spheres within the skin (often described as "grapes").

Fibroblastic: (See left)

Aggressive; often multiple, large



and ulcerated lesions.

Verrucose: Areas of scaly skin which are often raised.

Occult: Subtle areas of hair loss.

Mixed: Any two or more of the above (see large picture, left).

Malevolent: Rare, aggressive form that spreads via the lymphatic system.

ARE THERE RISK FACTORS?

Studies suggest that certain bloodlines are more prone to

developing sarcoids and this is due to mutations in those genes that would normally help to suppress cancers. Some French and Swiss Warmblood lines, for example, have been shown to be nine times more at risk.

Flies are strongly implicated in spreading sarcoids from infected to non-infected horses. Suitable precautions should therefore be taken when horses with sarcoids are kept in close proximity to non-affected animals.

CAN SARCOIDS BE TREATED?

The plethora of different treatment options demonstrates that no single treatment is 100% effective. Moreover, the choice of treatment may be determined additionally by other factors, such as the sarcoid's location on the body and whether it is an aggressive type of lesion. We have, however, found laser surgery and a novel cancer treatment called photodynamic therapy (PDT), both of which are widely used in human cancer patients, to be particularly effective in a great many cases.

If you are concerned about sarcoids and would like further information on laser treatment or other therapies, such as the Liverpool cream, please contact the clinic on **01460 66099**.

Just a Reminder ... Zone Visits



The free visit scheme has proved to be very popular and we are keen to continue it despite rising fuel costs. To help us help you please remember **we cannot set an appointment time until the morning of the visit** – this way the vets can plan a route that covers all their appointments whilst reducing their mileage. Also to keep administration costs down **please pay on the day**. All these savings we can pass onto you by **continuing not to charge a visit fee**. Please ensure your horse is in and ready for when the vet arrives.

Vaccinations



Although we endeavour to send clients a **reminder of when their horse's vaccination is due** we can not guarantee that the reminder will arrive. We recommend that you also **keep a note on your calendar** of when the booster is due. The vaccination deadlines according to the **Jockey Club rules** are: first vaccination, second

vaccination between 21 – 92 days after the first, third vaccinations between 150 and 215 days after the second. Boosters thereafter must be given within 365 days. To calculate how many days ago your last vaccination was please go to our website and on the Equine Facilities and Services page there is a vaccination calculator.

Client Evening

To worm or not to worm ... that is the question.



Sponsored by MERIAL

An in-depth presentation covering all aspects of controlling and treating parasites in horses. It will include advice on targeted worming and when best to do a worm egg count and how frequently it should be repeated. There will also be recommendations on treating foals and pregnant or lactating mares; best practice for new arrivals; and how to calculate the correct wormer dose for your horse. The evening will help you ensure your horse receives the correct treatment at the correct time.

Venue: Donyatt Village Hall

Time: 7.30pm

Date: Thursday 15 September

Tickets are FREE, but places are limited so please book early to avoid disappointment on **01460 66099**.

ALL WELCOME!

Laminitis

This spring/summer has seen the highest numbers of horses and ponies suffering from laminitis on record. The hot, dry spell in April caught many people out and new cases are being seen each week. For help on how to prevent or control laminitis download our free advice sheet from the Facilities and Services page of our website.

Small Animal Clinics

Don't forget that we also have two small animal clinics with the same high standards of care and customer service as our Equine Clinic. One is based at Hinton St George near Crewkerne and one at Creech St Michael near Taunton. For further information please look at our website or contact either clinic on the numbers below.

Contact the clinic for more information or look at our website
www.islevallyvets.co.uk

Equine Clinic: Eleighwater, Chard, TA20 3AF **Tel: 01460 66099**

Small Animal Clinics: Tetts Farm, West Street, Hinton St George, TA17 8SB **Tel: 01460 73398**
St Michael Road, Creech St Michael, TA3 5DP **Tel: 01823 444234**