



## Equine Newsletter - Winter

### MUD FEVER

With another wet and muddy spring on the cards for South Gippsland, mud fever may be a problem for many horses this year. Mud fever is a group of diseases in horses which cause irritation and dermatitis in the lower limbs. Often caused by a mixture of bacteria, typically *Dermatophilus congolensis*, and *Staphylococcus spp*, mud fever can also be caused by fungal organisms. Photosensitization, mange mites, contact dermatitis and other conditions also contribute to some cases. This condition is often called *greasy heel*.

Mud fever affects many horses and ponies during winter and early spring, heavy breeds with lots of feathering being most susceptible. Mud fever results in painful sores and scabs, which in severe cases can cause swelling of the lower leg and make the horse lame. Mud fever most commonly affects the pastern and heel area but can also affect the upper leg, the belly, and in some cases the neck area. Non-pigmented skin tends to be most commonly affected.

Under normal circumstances the skin acts as a protective barrier preventing bacteria from entering the horse's system and doing any damage. However, the integrity of the skin can become compromised through the abrasion of soil grit on cold, wet skin. The continual wetting of the skin due to prolonged standing in wet muddy conditions causes a breakdown of the protective barrier, allowing bacteria to enter and cause infection.

Treatment involves removing the horse from the wet, muddy conditions (if possible) and keeping the affected areas clean and dry. Daily washing with an antibacterial shampoo such as Malaseb or Betadine, followed by **thorough** drying of the affected areas will help remove the scabs and control the infection in most cases. Clipping the affected area can also help. Topical antibiotics such as Terramycin Pink Eye Spray or Pink Eye Powder are often very effective.

In severe cases, a vet visit may be needed to allow us to prescribe topical antibiotic / cortisone creams and system antibiotics and anti-inflammatories in refractory cases.

## Shane Ellis – Master Farrier at the Large Animal Clinic

TVG is pleased to announce we can now provide a farriery service through our relationship with Shane Ellis.

Shane, a master farrier based at Phillip Island, will be available at the Large Animal Clinic fortnightly on a Thursday. Routine trimming will cost \$50 and a set of shoes will cost \$120, payable on the day. For details of the full range of services available, you can check out Shane's website at <http://www.masterfarrier.net.au> or Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/MasterFarrierShaneEllis>

Additional procedures such as dentals, health checks, vaccinations or worming etc. can also be arranged for the same day.

A drop off/ pick up service is also available for a limited number of horses on the day, simply drop off your horse(s) first thing in the morning and pick them up again before 5.30 pm in the afternoon. An additional \$20 per horse is charged to cover the cost of cleaning stables and yards.

Bookings are essential and can be made by contacting the Large Animal Clinic on 5662 2251.



# FOOT ABSCESS

## What is a HOOF ABSCESS?

A foot abscess is an accumulation of pus between the sole or wall of the hoof and the sensitive corium or lamellae.

### Causes of hoof abscess:

The causes of foot abscess are many and include puncture wounds, impaction of dirt into small defects in the white line (junction between the sole and the wall) and damage to the corium from rotation of the pedal bone in advanced cases of founder. Constant wet and muddy conditions will soften the hoof and reduce the integrity of the white line making hoof abscesses more likely this year. Whatever the cause, a hoof abscess is extremely painful. Sudden onset of severe lameness with a hot hoof, swelling around the coronary band or heels and even the distal part of the leg is very suggestive of a hoof abscess. If left unchecked, a hoof abscess will often burst out at the coronary band or at the heels.

**Treatment of hoof abscesses** revolves around establishing drainage to relieve the pressure that results from the accumulation of pus. If the horse is shod, the shoe will need to be removed first to allow a thorough examination of the hoof. After drainage is established, the sensitive corium and or lamellae will be exposed and need protection from further damage. Poultices and bandaging will both help draw out any pus and protect the hoof while it heals. Cushioned boots can also be useful but care is needed to keep the hoof clean and dry under the boot. Nappies under the bandage can be quite useful to help keep the foot dry, provide some cushioning and absorb any draining pus. Tetanus anti toxin, antibiotics and anti-inflammatories are often also administered.

Not all abscesses are easy to find and sometimes poulticing for a couple of days is needed prior to establishing drainage. In some refractory cases or abscesses that result from penetration of the sole by a foreign body, x-rays may be needed to determine if the foreign body is still embedded in the foot and to assess the integrity of the pedal bone which can also become infected.

Generally, if good drainage can be established, the horse will be substantially improved in 2-3 days. If this rapid improvement does not occur, there is often more under-run sole that needs removing to improve drainage or even a second abscess may be present.



Looking for more useful information check out our webpage:

[www.tarwinvetgroup.com.au](http://www.tarwinvetgroup.com.au)

Here you can find copies of newsletters, meet the staff, find fact sheets, photo gallery, contact details, find out about any new products and much much more.

Our newsletters are now being sent via e-mail.

Please provide TVG with your email address to ensure you don't miss out!

TARWIN HUMOUR

### PRESCRIPTION DRUG DISPENSING HOURS:

Telephone 5662 2251 Monday to Friday  
8.45am – 10.00am & 1.00pm – 2.00pm  
9-10am Saturdays



JUNIOR: Daddy, there's a man at the circus who jumps on a horse's back, slips underneath his belly, catches hold of its tail and finishes on the horse's neck!

FATHER: That's nothing. I did all that the first time I rode a horse!

Leongatha: 5662 2251  
After Hours: 5662 2818

Foster: 5682 2757  
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Mirboo North: 5668 1225  
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