

Anna Metcalfe

We are delighted to welcome Anna Metcalfe to the team at North West Equine Vets. Anna has joined us as a part-time Veterinary Care Assistant. She assists vets at clinic and looking after our in patients alongside running her own freelance horse training business. Anna is also a key member of her family-run show team who operate under the banner of the Ryehouse Native Show Team.



Two eyes are better than one

A painful eye is a veterinary emergency. Most conditions are easily treated but if untreated severe disease can occur which may threaten the horse's sight in the future.

A painful eye will usually have swollen eyelids, drooping eyelashes, excessive tearing and blinking. Often we will need to sedate the horse to examine an eye thoroughly and may need to use local anaesthetic as well to stop the horse blinking. The most common eye conditions that we see in horses are conjunctivitis, corneal ulcers and uveitis.

Corneal ulcers are caused by damage to the surface of the eye and are diagnosed using a stain which stains the ulcer green. Prompt treatment is required as ulcers can progress and, in severe cases, can cause the eye to rupture. Treatment usually consists of antibiotic drops and oral anti-inflammatories and many ulcers treated in this way will clear up within a few days.

Uveitis is inflammation of the internal part of the eye and is very painful. It may occur in response to an ulcer or trauma, or it can be immune-related and Appaloosa horses are particularly susceptible. With uveitis the pupil becomes smaller and the eye may appear cloudy. It is very important to treat early as it can become a recurrent problem (known as 'Moon Blindness') and, in some cases, the eye will need to be removed as it becomes permanently damaged. Treatment is usually with atropine drops, to keep the pupil open, antibiotic and steroid drops and oral anti-inflammatories.

The important thing to remember is that eye problems in the horse can be very serious so it is always advisable to call for advice if your horse is affected.



Corneal ulcer, stained green

Equine recurrent uveitis



An interesting case ... Coronary Band Dystrophy

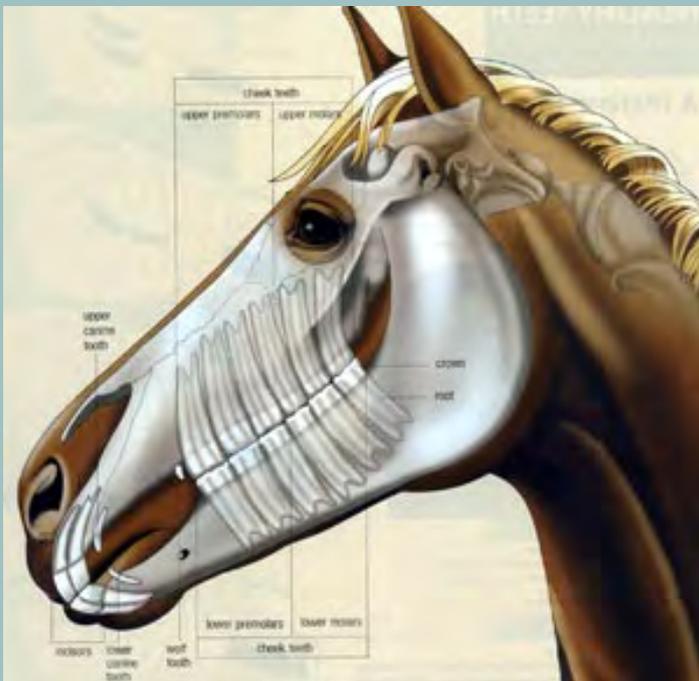
We occasionally come across horses whose immune systems have turned against themselves. The resulting diseases are termed “auto-immune”, and they present a real clinical challenge, regardless of the part of the body that is affected.

Tissue at the coronary band of the foot is responsible for the growth of healthy hoof wall (and similarly chestnuts and ergots). When it comes under attack from the horse’s immune system, the horn is not produced properly. It tends to grow too quickly to be formed correctly, and the resulting horn is of very poor quality.

In severe cases, the entire hoof wall is crumbly and fragile, often with large cracks and a very uneven surface. At the coronary band itself, there are often thick slabs of hoof material flaking off resulting in bleeding and considerable pain.

We take a biopsy of the coronary band (a deep slice of tissue removed with a scalpel under sedation) and send it to a laboratory along with some of the dry flakes. The pathologists can confirm the diagnosis by microscopic examination of the samples.

Treatment at present is mostly experimental, and based on similar conditions in humans. It is vital that the area is clipped and kept very clean. Eliminating any possible parasites (eg feather mites) or infection is important, before using cytotoxic ointments or creams. Unfortunately, there has been little success, and specialist veterinary dermatologists are keen to hear of any cases so that different therapies and managements can be tried.



FREE Yard Dental Visits

We always try to make our visits as efficient as possible, to cut down the cost to us and to you. Do remember that if there are **four or more** horses on the same yard requiring dental work, a visit for those dental procedures will be **free of charge**.

A dental check should be carried out, at least every 12 months so that any sharp points can be dealt with and any potential problems identified.

Our vets are experienced in the use of dentistry power tools and receive regular training to further their knowledge.

Please call our friendly team 0808 168 5580 for a visit.