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park something in front of them and postcode the top. It has been reported that the horses and ponies have been hand picked. Apparently someone comes round and plaits part of the tail and the animal is collected later. One from Yorkshire was transported as far as the Ferry Port at Holyhead.

It was picked up because it was micro chipped. If not it would be in Ireland now. Some ponies are not so lucky.

So what can you do to protect yours? Visit your horse regularly and pop in extra visits or ask a friend to keep an eye out. If you see anything suspicious take down the details and inform the Police. Join Horsecatch. You can purchase a gate plaque from them saying "These horses are micro chipped and Police identifiable." Get them chipped. Rase Equine has an offer that applies to Mondays in this area for the regular booster jabs and micro chipping. There is no call out fee so make enquiries and take advantage of it.

Freeze marking is also an option or invest in branding irons of your postcode to mark the hooves. Your farrier would do it for you when they are shod and they last for months.

Now is the time when horses are more likely to have digestive problems as, unlike when we turn them out, we do not make the gradual change when we bring them in. Most horses will be in by now if they generally come in for the winter but, regardless of if they are in or out, the ten rules of feeding still apply. Make sure your worming programme is up to date and their teeth are in good

order. Older horses particularly need extra attention and your feeding regime looking at to include additives.

A turnout rug that fits correctly and, if possible, a spare ready for any mishaps. It is also advisable to have a spare pair of leg straps. There are some brilliant rugs on the market but shop around and make up your mind if you want one with a neck or a detachable neck. As the winter progresses take the rug off and brush the inside and check your horse for any rubbing particularly on the withers, shoulders and, especially older horses, the hips. Stand back and look at your horse and then you can decide if it needs more feed.

I now have a full sack of stamps ready to go to Bransby Home Rest for Horses so many thanks to all who have contributed. Please continue either to myself or to the Post Office.

Here's a good tip from one of my readers. Make your own hay steamer for a fraction of the cost. You will need a wallpaper stripper (Great if you already have one) and a large plastic storage container with lid. Cut a hole in the side for the hose bit and seal the edges. (Simple!) I am assured it works and saves all that messy, heavy soaking of hay.

Well I think that's about it for this time. Keep your tips, news and ideas coming in.

I wish you and yours a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

Take care - Ride safely.

Aileen 01469 530643



EAST HALTON SHOW

Contrary to the information contained in an article in the last edition of the Gander, the East Halton Show is alive and kicking and in no way is it under threat of folding.

Recent years have seen a rise in the number of volunteers helping to set up the show and lots of willing helpers on the day of the show. Some of them have been involved with our show for many years and we are greatly indebted to them.

Show day 2009 was one of our most successful events to date with record numbers of people attending. The horse classes were well supported, we had a dog show, terrier racing and there was a tremendous number of vintage tractors, along with small oil engines as well.

I can assure your readers that there will be an East Halton show next year. It is arranged for **Sunday 8th August 2010** and a warm welcome awaits everyone.

George Turner (Show Chairman)