

Has your horse seen the dentist????

Whether your horse is used for business or pleasure we all have a duty of care to them. We ourselves know of the discomfort due to dental problems and luckily we have the luxury of being able to do something about it. Our horses rely on us, as owners, to do the same for them. With the modern advances in nutrition and our own higher standard of keeping horses, they can now live a lot longer. Unfortunately, for horses, their teeth are not never-ending! Once they have their full mouth of adult teeth at the age of 6, the tooth is already a predetermined size inside the cheek and merely erupts out of the gum according to the amount of wear until the horse reaches its twenties.

We usually only start to wonder if there is something wrong when a change presents itself in our horse. Anything from dropping his food as he eats, headshaking or weight loss to developing what seems to be bad behaviour when ridden. These can all have other causes but considering whether your horse has had a recent dental check is worthy of ruling out.

Horses teeth erupt at a rate of 2-3mm a year and ideally in the wild they would wear at the same rate. Unfortunately due to domestication and the concentrates that are fed routinely these days this is very rarely the case and sharp points form on the outer edges of the upper teeth and inner edges of the lower teeth, this prevents the correct movement of the jaw,

inhibits chewing and can cause pain and ulcers. As time goes on these points get larger and larger until the horse can barely move his mouth. This is easily preventable with regular dental floats (rasping) and is a relatively minor problem if kept on top of.

Ideally all horses should be booked in for a routine appointment every 6 months to allow this problem to be alleviated before it gets too bad and also to check there are no other problems beginning. It is also important to start a horses dental routine as early in life as possible, not only so they can get used to the strange situation and equipment but also so the development of the mouth can be monitored.

Amongst other problems, it is quite common for a baby tooth or cap to become stuck during the eruption of the adult teeth and it is very important that this is removed in order to maintain the correct development of the mouth. At the other end of the scale once your horse reaches his twenties it is important that the teeth he has left are preserved as best as possible as they cease to erupt.

The cost of a standard health float can vary from around £35 to £60 but it is a relatively small amount to pay for peace of mind and comfort for your horse. After all we all want our beasts of burden to be around for as long as possible don't we?

Rebecca Stangroom



ALLOTMENTS - VACANCIES

Do you want delicious, super fresh, home grown veg and fruit for you and your family? Maybe it's important you know what has 'gone into and onto' your food?

Having an Allotment is just the answer and we happen to have a few vacant plots (and half plots if that would suit you better)

Maybe you are a complete novice like some of us? Don't worry, with help, advice and inspiration from the likes of Kev, Martin, Stan and Andrea – you'll quickly see results. Indeed our membership is very diverse and many plots are looked after by couples Maybe you are looking for a new shared interest?

Add some hard work and you'll soon see the 'fruits of your labour'. As Joe Swift, of 'Gardeners World' fame, showed, within a year a novice can create their own urban oasis and make new friends into the bargain!

I know we might sound a bit mad but it really is fun. It's also lot cheaper and nearer, than the gym (it's off the Green Ramper at North End). We'll even throw in the fresh air free and you'll also be close to nature – keep an eye out for our resident fox!

Thinking of leaving it till the spring! You'd be wrong Start now and you can expect early veg and make the most out of 2010.

By the way, the rent per annum is only £25 for a full plot and £13 for a half plot (plus £25 admin costs in the first year only)

Want to find out more please ring Kev Wood 531342 or Derek Sharland 07786 560760.

