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on Facebook:

[facebook.com/halevet-groupequine](https://www.facebook.com/halevet-groupequine)



Check out our website:

[haleequinevets.co.uk](http://www.haleequinevets.co.uk)

## Our news and updates

### Welcome to the team Imogen

We would like to give a warm Hale style welcome to our new vet Imogen.

Imogen joins us from an equine ambulatory practice in Dorset, and is happy to cater for any of your horse's needs!

When not at work she can be found hiking in Scotland, riding or playing rugby.

Find out more about Imogen in the team spotlight section on the last page of this newsletter.



### Free zone day visits

We are happy to offer free visits for routine work, with specific days set out for local zones.

Places are limited, so we recommend that you call early to avoid disappointment. Our deadline is 4pm the day before the visit.

On free zone days we can't guarantee which vet will be working that shift or a specific time and you will need to be available throughout the day. However, if you would like to request a specific vet or time on your zone day, we will charge a normal visit fee of £10 off.

[haleequinevets.co.uk/free-zone-day-visits](http://haleequinevets.co.uk/free-zone-day-visits)



### Hale Equiplus Health Scheme

Our Equiplus Health Scheme is the simple way to support your horse's health while saving money.

Your horse will require routine treatments and vaccinations throughout its life, and our plan gives the peace of mind that comes from knowing that care is covered.

#### What does the Basic Health Plan Cover?

- An annual booster vaccination for influenza and tetanus, as appropriate for your horse
- Full dental examination and routine teeth rasp, including sedation\*
- Visit charge associated with the above (one visit per year)
- Tailored worming programme including an Equest Pramox wormer and three faecal worm egg counts
- 5% discount on any additional veterinary fees required outside the plan (this does not include drugs or laboratory fees)
- 5% discount for those requiring a primary vaccine course
- Flexibility of payment - the opportunity to pay for the plan in one annual lump sum or twelve monthly instalments

We also do a Basic Plus Scheme, a Veteran Scheme and a Competition Scheme.

For more information, please visit our website:

[haleequinevets.co.uk/equine-health-scheme](http://haleequinevets.co.uk/equine-health-scheme)





## Project WORMS - working together to tackle anthelmintic resistance

This spring we are calling on clients to support our efforts to tackle wormer resistance. We have launched Project WORMS, which stands for Working to Overcome Resistance and Make for a Sustainable future, to put the spotlight on this important issue that affects all of our horses and ponies.

Project WORMS recognises that veterinary teams and owners need to work together to tackle resistance to worming products. A responsible approach to the use of wormers is crucial to maximise animal welfare and ensure we have effective products available in the future.

You can help by completing a short questionnaire to tell us how you currently control worms in your horses. The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete, and there is a separate survey aimed at stud owners/managers that takes around 20 minutes. Your responses are anonymous, but you can put your details into a prize draw to win £100 'Love to Shop' vouchers.

The information from the surveys will help us to help horse owners and keepers improve worming practices in the future.

### Members of the team involved in Project WORMS include:

Tim Mair, CVS Group Ltd; Julia Shrubbs, Ashbrook Equine Hospital; Camilla Scott, Rosssdales Equine Hospital; Russell Parker, Liphook Equine Hospital; Rachel Dean, Director of Clinical Research and Excellence; Natalie Robinson, Clinical Data Manager

For more information and to access the surveys, please use the following link:

[vetpartners.co.uk/project-worms-working-together-to-tackle-anthelmintic-resistance/](https://vetpartners.co.uk/project-worms-working-together-to-tackle-anthelmintic-resistance/)



# PROJECT WORMS



# Join our 'Equine Weight Loss Programme'

## Equine Weight Management Support with Dengie Horse Feeds.

We're aiming to help horses and ponies enjoy a happy, healthy 2022 by raising awareness of equine obesity.

During March we have teamed up with Dengie to share tips and informative videos, on our Facebook page, to help you monitor your horse's fat and keep them at a healthy weight, which is important to lower the risk of serious conditions such as laminitis and equine metabolic syndrome.

If you struggle to keep your horse's weight in check, there will be support to help you get them back in shape in a safe and controlled way.

Joining the equine weight loss programme is free to our clients and provides you with the tools you need to help your horse live a healthy, happy life.

You will receive an Equine Weight Management booklet which includes an easy-to-follow guide to body fat scoring, how to measure your horse's bodyweight and advice on exercise and nutrition. It also features sections to fill in your horse's progress, before and after photos, plus targets. We also have a number of free weigh tapes to go to the first of our clients who sign up.

Speak to your vet or one of our receptionists about how to join.

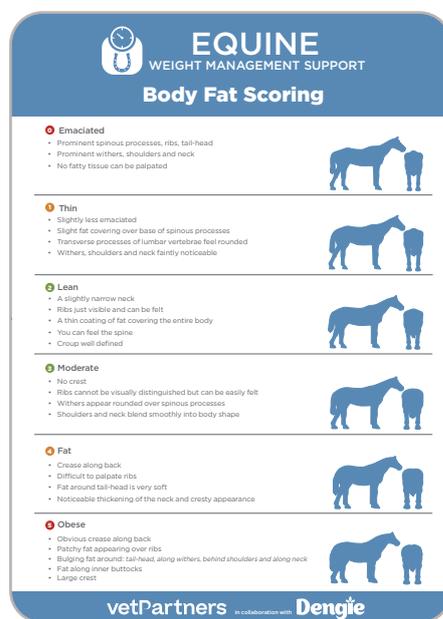


**EQUINE**  
WEIGHT MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

**Healthy Weight, Healthy Horse**

Horse's name:

vetPartners in collaboration with **Dengie**



**EQUINE**  
WEIGHT MANAGEMENT SUPPORT  
**Body Fat Scoring**

- Emaciated**
  - Prominent spinous processes, ribs, tail-head
  - Prominent withers, shoulders and neck
  - No fatty tissue can be palpated
- Thin**
  - Slightly less emaciated
  - Slight fat covering over base of spinous processes
  - Transverse processes of lumbar vertebrae feel rounded
  - Withers, shoulders and neck faintly noticeable
- Lean**
  - A slightly narrow neck
  - Ribs just visible and can be felt
  - A thin coating of fat covering the entire body
  - You can feel the spine
  - Croup well defined
- Moderate**
  - No crest
  - Ribs cannot be visually distinguished but can be easily felt
  - Withers appear rounded over spinous processes
  - Shoulders and neck blend smoothly into body shape
- Fat**
  - Crease along back
  - Difficult to palpate ribs
  - Fat around tail-head is very soft
  - Noticeable thickening of the neck and cresty appearance
- Obese**
  - Obvious crease along back
  - Patchy fat appearing over ribs
  - Bulging fat around tail-head, along withers, behind shoulders and along neck
  - Fat along inner buttocks
  - Large crest

vetPartners in collaboration with **Dengie**



**Body fat scoring**

Here is a practical guide on how to body fat score your horse

Score each of these areas from 0-5 using the images below as a reference guide. Remember, a score of 2.5-3.5 would be considered a healthy range for the vast majority of horses.

**Neck and shoulder** - Feel along the top of your horse's neck/crest. You should be able to wobble it. Next, run your hand over your horse's shoulder which should be clearly defined. If your hand runs smoothly from the neck to the shoulder, this indicates fat accumulated in front of the shoulder.

**Back and side** - Run your hand along the back where you should be able to feel the spine. Your hand should be able to follow the arch over the spine towards the backbone. If your hand lays flat across their back, they are carrying too much fat. Run your hand over their side and you should be able to feel their ribs with ease and with light pressure. If you can't feel them, or have to press firmly, your horse is carrying excess fat.

**Hindquarters** - Run your hand over the hip bones, which you should see them even under quite a thick layer of fat. If you are unable to feel or see them, your horse is carrying far too much fat. If you are unable to feel or see them, your horse is carrying too much fat. Safely look at your horse from behind. Their hindquarters should be rounded with limited fat pads around the tail head.

## SPRING WARNING! - Atypical myopathy

Atypical myopathy often occurs during the **spring** and autumn months and is a highly fatal muscle disease in horses.

It is caused by a toxin found in sycamore trees (*Acer Pseudoplatanus*) and is a distressing disease that results in degradation of respiratory, cardiac (heart) and postural muscles.

Affected horses show signs of weakness, muscle trembling and pain, plus sometimes they can show signs of colic and exercise intolerance, among a variety of other clinical signs.

To minimise your horse's risk of atypical myopathy, reduce exposure to sycamore seeds and seedlings by removing them from the ground. If this is not possible, removing the horse from the area is crucial.



**Atypical myopathy causes high fatality rates, with 50-85% of sufferers losing their lives, so it is imperative to seek veterinary attention in any case.**

If you have any questions about this disease, please give us a call on **01249 658379**.

## Microchipping - your questions answered!

### Do all horses need to be microchipped?

In the United Kingdom, it is now mandatory for all horses, ponies and donkeys to be microchipped. This is important because lost or stolen horses can be reunited with their owners more easily, but it also improves animal welfare because the police and animal welfare organisations can trace the owners of dumped horses.

The microchip must be implanted by a vet and the owner/keeper has a legal obligation to keep up to date via the database.

### Can you get fined if your horse is not microchipped?

Owners who fail to microchip their horses, ponies and donkeys could face sanctions from their local authority including a compliance notice and a fine of up to £200.

If your horse, pony or donkey is not yet microchipped, we strongly advise you get this done as soon as possible.

### When do you need to microchip a foal?

Legally, foals must be microchipped within six months of birth or before 31 December of the year in which they were born. Often this is done through the society for the particular breed.

### What should I do if I am unsure if my horse is microchipped?

As your vet to scan your horse to check for you

### What is a microchip?

A microchip is a small electronic device, about the size of a grain of rice. Each microchip has a unique number within it that can be scanned, and recorded in a central database, along with an owner's personal contact details.

The microchip is placed underneath the skin using a specially designed implanter. An anaesthetic is not required, and the procedure should be no more painful than a routine vaccination.

### How do you update your details?

You will need to update your details each time you move house or your phone number or email address change. To do this, visit: [equineregister.co.uk](http://equineregister.co.uk).

### What is the Central Equine Database?

The Central Equine Database (CED) is an online database which holds records of all equines in the UK. You can visit [equineregister.co.uk](http://equineregister.co.uk) to set up an account and make use of its services: [equineregister.co.uk](http://equineregister.co.uk).



## Equine passports - all you need to know!

### Do all horses need a passport?

On 1st July 2009, it became a requirement for all horses, ponies and donkeys in the UK to have a passport, even if they are retired or do not ever leave the yard.?

You can be fined up to £5,000 for not having a valid passport!

The legislation comes from an EU directive that has been adopted into UK law to protect the human food chain from meat containing traces of equine medicine that may be harmful to humans. It has had the additional benefit of making it harder to sell stolen horses.

### Is there a deadline to apply for a new passport?

Yes - under the legislation, foals must have a passport and microchip within six months of birth or before 30th November of the year in which they were born, whichever date occurs later.

If your horse does not have a passport your insurance may be invalid; you may also be liable to prosecution if you attempt to sell the horse

### When do I need to show my equine's passport?

The passport must be always kept with the horse (except in special circumstances such as a short hack/ride). For example, if you normally stable your horse at livery, the passport must be kept at the livery yard. You might be asked to present your horse's passport at a competition, when transporting your horse or when your horse receives veterinary treatment.

If you have a horse in your care and you can't show a valid passport on request, you could get an unlimited fine.

### What do I do with the passport if my horse has passed away?

In the event of the horse's death, you will need to send the passport back to the office that issued it. It is an offence not to do this within 30 days

### Section IX/II of the horse passport

Section IX of the Horse Passport MUST be signed by the owner, keeper or veterinarian to identify whether the horse is 'intended' or 'not intended' to enter the human food chain.

This is primarily to ensure that no horses receiving certain medications enter the food chain, and also to prevent the sale of stolen horses or ponies as the passport should prove its identity.

### FEI passports

An FEI passport is mandatory for horses competing at most international FEI sanctioned events.

If you are planning on competing at an FEI event and your horse requires an FEI passport, please contact your discipline directly for information on how to apply.

Be aware that most disciplines require at least 6 weeks' notice in advance before they can issue a passport.

# Azoturia (tying up)

## What is azoturia?

Azoturia (tying up) is a condition where a horse's muscles become tight or 'cramp up' over their back and hind quarters. The muscles contract so much that they become rock solid and the horse's back end appears to be glued to the floor. If the cramping is so severe, myoglobin is released from the muscles and into the kidneys, which is why the horse's urine can become a dark red colour.

**Azoturia should be classed as an emergency and your vet should be called straight away.**

## What are the types of azoturia?

Sporadic azoturia is a single episode due to external factors such as exercise, environment or diet e.g. a three day eventer on a really hot day.

Chronic azoturia is an internal problem. It can be triggered by exercise or poor diet management, however, there will be an underlying defect in the muscles.



## Treating azoturia

- The vet is likely to administer an intravenous painkiller and possibly a muscle relaxant
- Severely affected horses will require intravenous fluids to reduce the risk of kidney damage
- Box rest is needed initially while the muscles recover, followed by gentle exercise either in hand or turned out in a paddock depending on the individual case
- Blood tests can be repeated prior to commencing exercise to confirm that muscle enzyme levels have returned to normal

## Preventing azoturia

The best way to prevent horses from azoturia is through careful management:

- Avoid days off or prolonged box rest in susceptible horses
- Reducing hard feed when in light work
- Feeding a high fat/low starch diet
- There is some evidence that low vitamin E or selenium levels may be implicated in a few cases and supplementation can be given (contact your vet for further information)

In complicated cases and in certain susceptible breeds such as quarter horses, genetic testing and muscle biopsies can be useful to give further information.

## Remember azoturia is classed as an emergency!

If you suspect your horse has azoturia, your vet should be called straight away. If possible try not to move the horse and make the surroundings as quiet and safe as possible.



## Signs of azoturia

- Firm painful muscles
- Excessive sweating
- Rapid heart rate
- Reluctant to move
- Dark red/brown urine

## Diagnosing azoturia

Diagnosis of azoturia is by careful clinical examination, some cases can mimic other conditions such as colic or pelvic fracture so veterinary attention is important. Blood samples are usually taken to measure the levels of two muscle enzymes, creatinine kinase (CK) and aspartate aminotransferase (AST) which are released when muscles are damaged. The blood tests allow us to confirm the condition, to assess the severity of the attack and to compare to future samples when monitoring recovery.

# Brain matters

On average a horse's brain is the size of a large orange but weighs significantly more at roughly 623g and it is around half the size and weight of a human brain. Given that horses are much larger than humans the brain size is proportionally much smaller in relation to body size.

## What is the brain made of?

Located below the ears and above the eyes within the horse's head, the brain has two layers made up of highly specialised predominantly neural tissue. The inner white matter is a layer of connecting myelinated nerve fibres (encased in a fatty myelin sheath to enhance the transmission of electrical impulses). The outer grey matter contains nerve cells and unmyelinated fibres.

In the centre the brain's core is 'hollow', containing a system of cavities, called ventricles, and ducts filled with cerebro-spinal fluid (CSF).

## Brain structure

The horse's brain is broadly divided into three regions, each with a left and right side or hemisphere:

**The cerebral cortex** (forebrain) is the largest part of the brain and is responsible for perception, information processing and voluntary control of movement.

**The cerebellum** lies behind the cerebral cortex and manages coordination of movement and fine control.

**The brainstem** is a bridge between various parts of the nervous system and contains tracts carrying information from the cortex and cerebellum towards the spinal column.

It also contains the roots of nerves to the head and neck (cranial nerve ganglia). These include the trigeminal and facial nerves that coordinate movement and sensation in the face and the vestibular nerve that controls the position of the head, eyes and main body in relation to gravity.

## Team spotlight with equine vet Imogen Frame

### Describe your role?

Day to day I do routine visits such as vaccinations, dentals or non-emergency investigations, whilst providing pre-emptive advice to clients to ensure the health and welfare of their horses.

### What's are your veterinary interests?

After owning horses for 30 years and treating them as a vet I have developed a keen interest in equine behaviour. Anaesthesia and cardiology are also areas of interest

### What is something you've always wanted to do but haven't yet done?

I've always wanted to scuba dive and see orcas out in the wild, though for the latter I'd stay in the boat!

### If you were a horse, what breed would you be and why?

It'd have to be a Friesian, strong, calm, friendly and good hair!

### Who in your life has inspired you most?

My partner, though we can't tell him that. He really showed me over lockdown how to appreciate every day and see the positive side of every situation and to live life to never have regrets.

### When you're not at work, what are your passions?

Having grown up hiking the Scottish highlands I love exploring the British countryside by foot, horse riding, working out, rugby and swimming.

