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### Equine Myths

As owners and perhaps competitors, we have many responsibilities towards our horses. This includes feeding and caring for them properly, and addressing any injuries or illnesses, but

that responsibility doesn't stop at the stable door. We also have wider responsibilities within the equine community – mainly to not cause or allow harm to others through our own actions, or inaction. Even those of us that are familiar with all things horsey may still be deceived by some common myths surrounding horses. It's important to identify and discredit myths that have endured for years because it could impact on your horse's health, happiness, and performance.

***Myth - Horses must be wormed every 4-6 weeks***

The best way to control your horse's worm

burden is to monitor it through repeated faecal worm egg counts. Your horse can then be wormed appropriately if required. By doing this you're ensuring that your horse is only given a wormer if necessary. Should your horse need to be treated it is then essential to choose a suitable wormer and use it at the correct dose. It's important to dose horses accurately for their body-weight and to rotate the class of wormer used for EACH grazing season and not within the season.

***Myth - If a faecal worm egg count is clear there is no need to use a wormer.***

Faecal worm egg counts

will only help monitor certain types of adult worms and won't be able to detect tapeworm or bot burdens as these worms don't produce eggs as part of their lifecycle. A "clear" result means that there are no active adult worm eggs in the sample provided. It does not mean that your horse does not have worms! There are many larval stages to worm lifecycles and tapeworms and bots will not be detected. You should discuss with your vet the need for any further testing and the use of appropriate tapeworm and bot treatments.

***Myth - It's better to not pick out a horse's feet during wet, muddy conditions as the mud that is already in the hoof keeps the foot dry***

It's important to clean dirt and manure from the underside of the hooves as well as lodged stones and small sticks that can cause discomfort and bruising. If wet mud remains in place it will keep the sole and frog damp for an extended period of time. This results in the horn structures becoming soft and potentially not as resilient as they could be. In addition, by cleaning the feet out it allows the hooves to be checked for any signs of injury or infection.

## Watery mouth disease and Joint ill

These are two of the most important diseases in new born lambs with great economic loss...prevention is key!

### Watery Mouth Disease

Clinical signs are: profuse salivation and a wet lower jaw, increasing abdominal distension although the lamb has not been sucking. Lambs aged 12-36 hours are dull, lethargic, depressed and reluctant to suck (twins and especially triplets are more prone due to less colostrum) Treatments are: soapy water enemas, mild laxatives and oral antibiotics are effective during the early phase. Oral electrolyte therapy at a rate of 50 mls/kg four times daily, amoxicillin or similar drug injected intramuscularly. Control measures must include: cleaning and disinfection of individual pens between lambing ewes, collection and disposal of placentae and provide abundant clean dry

bedding. Ensure that lambs ingest sufficient suck colostrum as soon as possible following birth and give oral antibiotic preparation within the first 15 minutes after birth if there is an existing issue.

### Joint Ill (infectious polyarthritis)

Clinical signs: Streptococcus dysgalactiae infections are acquired during the first few days of life with lameness visible from 5-10 day old. The joints most commonly affected are the carpal joints, hock, fetlock and stifle joints. The affected joints are swollen, hot and painful. Infection causes considerable muscle wastage. After only one week lambs with polyarthritis are smaller than their co-twin and in poorer body condition. Management and Control measures include *immediate action* with antibiotics and anti-inflammatories will improve cure rate. Also, reducing the environmental bacterial challenge by maintaining good hygiene and lambs must

ingest sufficient colostrum and appropriate navel treatment is critical.



### Pet Bereavement Support Service

Here in Strule Vets we are all pet owners. Each and every one of us have loved and lost pets so we understand the pain and anguish that their passing away brings. We want you to know that we are here for you and also make you aware of a Pet Bereavement Support Service. If you are in need of help and would like somebody to talk to after the loss of your pet, please call 0800 096 6606 or email [pbsmail@bluecross.org.uk](mailto:pbsmail@bluecross.org.uk). You're not alone.

[strulevets.com](http://strulevets.com)



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