

WARWICK EQUINE VETERINARIANS 185 BRACKER ROAD WARWICK.

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Newsletter

- **Tias college duties and away 2-10 July**
- **Building update**
- **Staff update**
- **Pre-purchase examinations**

It is great to be able to say the building progress is going well. The roof and most of the walls are in and we are about to get on with the big job of fitting it out. We are still seeing a few cases at Lona, but once the surgery comes on stream we should be able to handle many more cases both in number and complexity.



Where the horse surgery, recovery box and transfer area is taking shape.

We have been quietly looking around for another vet to join the practice. We are in discussions with 2 veterinarians and hope to be able to announce something on this soon. One of our neighbours, Judi, has started with us in the role of maintaining the facilities in a clean and functional state. Judi has a few horses of her own and will also assist in the care of hospitalised horses. In the meantime we have been very grateful with the understanding shown by many of our clients who have had to fit in with my availability. Hopefully we have not had to compromise at all on the quality of our care.

We have had a busy month, even though the colder months traditionally tend to be quieter in equine practice in this part of the world. Cases seen have varied widely.

Surgery and lameness cases remain a big mainstay of our work. However with Frank

gone I have had to do more general practice cases and one feature has been more cases involving parasites than I have seen in many years.

Whether this is due to seasonal conditions, or changes in the way we are using our drenches is unclear.

Obviously some cases have involved horses which were not adequately or regularly dewormed. However, we did see significantly high worm egg counts in some very well managed properties. This is worrying and may reflect resistance to our main drench families. We did do drench effectiveness testing in each case where we identified a high egg count and in all cases after appropriate deworming the counts dropped to zero. This is what we would expect if the drench is working as it should.

The question then becomes has there been adequate frequency of drenching, is the dose rate appropriate, has there been adequate paddock hygiene and rotations and other factors. Often there are complex interactions and if you feel you may have a problem give us a call.



Sometimes it feels a little slow but in reality the new facility is progressing on schedule. It is exciting for the whole team to think of how we will be able to do so much more for horses here at Warwick



This is a photo sent to us from a young draft horse they had just purchased after its first drenching. If you look carefully there are at least 3 different species of worms being passed. This is typical of heavy stocking rates with poor parasite control, something which can have severe adverse outcomes for the horses.

Tias Away from 2nd to the 10th July

Every year in early July as part of my duties as Chief Examiner of the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists, I am required to attend and oversee the examinations of veterinarians and future specialists from Australia, New Zealand and increasingly around the world. This is a very busy time for me and leaves me with little time for managing WEV cases and issues.

Unfortunately Frank felt he was unable to stay on until after this time, so we will not have a vet available at all times for emergencies during this time.

I will have my phone diverted to Chaylee whenever I am not available. I will return calls as soon as I can during this period, and if something needs urgent attention we will refer you to another practitioner. Chaylee will be able to handle dispensing of medications if needed and appropriate.



Tias lecturing at the conference last year which is run as part of the College week.

Lameness , navicular bone and pre-purchase examinations

Pre-purchase examinations, and providing opinions on lameness and xrays to owners and referral vets is a weekly occurrence for us. A particularly difficult area to assess well is the navicular bone and its associated structures. It is without doubt that the area within the back part of the hoof, with its navicular bone, deep flexor tendon, ligaments, bursae and joints are a common cause of lameness. In the past, because our understanding of the region was not good we tended to call any lameness attributable to the region navicular disease.

Today, with much better diagnostic options, our understanding and ability to diagnose more exactly what is causing the pain and lameness makes this term less useful. In fact I rarely use the term now. It is better to more clearly define the cause of the pain within the hoof and then prognosis (likely outcome) and treatment options are more easily determined.

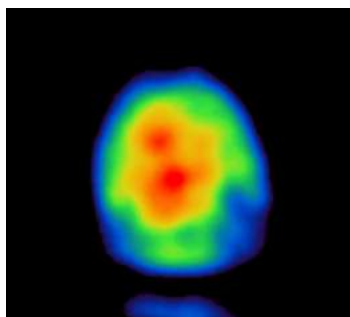
Although much of our increased understanding of lameness of the region has come about due to advanced imaging, mostly MRI, in Queensland we still don't have access to this imaging modality. What we do have though is the benefit of the knowledge that MRI studies have contributed to the literature.

There are many other options available to use in Queensland. In a round about way using specialised examination techniques, nerve blocks, and x-rays we can often get a good handle on what is going on. As well at the University of Queensland at Gatton we have access to scintigraphy and CT which can help in some cases as well. I am most fortunate in my career to have had exposure to all these techniques and I think this helps me assess these cases even when I don't have the ability to use them.

The interpretation of x-rays of the navicular bone remains a problem area. Some of this is due to historic reasons, and "lesions" we thought were significant when I graduated from university are now known not to be an issue. If vets have not taken the time to stay current over-interpretation of what is present on xrays is not uncommon. Conversely with the benefit of knowledge gained from techniques like MRI we are now able to "see" on x-ray many significant lesions we might have once missed.

Another problem with the use of x-rays in pre purchase examinations is the varying quality of x-rays taken. I am commonly called upon to give opinions on x-rays of questionable quality and it stands to reason if the x-rays are not ideal, we have to be more careful in our interpretation, especially in a pre purchase situation.

Lastly, x-rays are not a functional test. It does not tell us if the region is inflamed or painful, all it helps us with is the structure. Functional tests like scintigraphy, nerve blocks and possibly contrast CT are often needed to determine whether what we see on the x-rays is actually causing problems for the horse.



An example of a bone scan of the foot of a horse we examined at Werrisbee. This is a great way to determine if a lesion which shows up on x-ray is significant. The red in the area of the navicular bone signifies that there is bone modelling happening in this region and therefore under stress.



This is an example of a severely diseased and degenerate navicular bone with multiple large cystic and lytic regions within the bone. This would not be controversial in a pre purchase situation as most vets would conclude this would be likely to be a significant problem to the horse.



This is an example of a navicular bone with marked modelling on the medial aspect of the bone and small synovial invaginations. This would be more difficult to interpret in isolation and in my view in a pre-purchase examination getting a consensus of opinion amongst a number of vets would be more difficult.

Unfortunately we are often unable to go to functional tests in pre-purchase examinations and therefore it is common, and understandable, for opinions of veterinarians to err on the side of caution.



Above is a normal navicular bone, and below a severely sclerotic bone suggestive of severe stress and degeneration. Not all cases are this obvious and if in doubt, second opinions, very high quality images, and other tests may be needed to help you come to a conclusion about significance in this difficult to interpret region.



Warwick Equine Veterinarians

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Our goal is to provide excellence in clinical service to all our equine patients.

A professional, compassionate and caring approach with good communication, and up to date services.

Excellence in Equine Veterinary Care

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