



Newsletter

Brachial arch defect in a foal **Hip fracture** **Cryptorchid donkey**

December is upon us and the hot dry conditions remain for most of the practice area. Thoroughbreds breeding is nearing completion, however, we are still working with quite a lot of other breeds with assisted reproduction. Other work including surgery, lameness and general practice keeps us busy during the gaps.

It was a very sad month for all of us at WEV, with the accidental death of a great friend of our practice, Basil Nolan. Basil and Tias have worked together to get the best outcomes possible for Raheen's horses on an almost daily basis over very many years. Basil's straightforward and practical nature and good humour will be sorely missed by all at WEV; he has left a big hole in our lives. Basil was an outstanding man and we feel for his family and his many friends.



The next 2 cases both co-incidentally both involved Friesian horses, and unfortunately both had sad outcomes.

The first was a day old foal. The foal had been observed to repeatedly have copious milk coming from its nostrils. The owners also noted a worsening over the day and the foal tended to cough after feeding. They suspected cleft palate after some online research.

Cleft palate is indeed one of the causes of this scenario, but there are many others. When we arrived on farm, a quick oral examination ruled out this condition. We then went on to scope the foal. Endoscopy allows fast and accurate diagnosis of many of the congenital malformations that can cause presentation. This case had one of the classic severe malformations which are associated with faulty development in utero of the brachial arches.

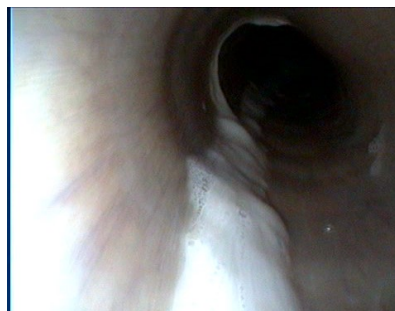
This is a still from a video clip which gives an idea of what is going on. The roof of the pharynx is collapsed down and in front of the open-



ing to the oesophagus and trachea. It makes it hard for the animal to swallow normally and direct fluids or feed into the right passage. It is easier to appreciate this condition on video but it is not hard to imagine milk going in the wrong direction on swallowing.

In this next clip from the video, large amounts of milk in the trachea is apparent. This no doubt was the cause of the coughing and spluttering after nursing.

Sadly this foal had a severe deformity for which there is no cure. Some less severe cases of



rostral displacement of the palatine arch can survive but often it causes problems with breathing in work or with swallowing. Because of the rapidly worsening condition of the foal and the hopeless long term outlook, we had to euthanase him.

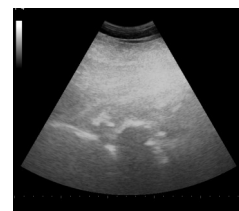
The next case was a big Friesian gelding about 7 years old. Another practice had anaesthetised him to castrate him about 3 months earlier and he had been severely lame since recovery from the anaesthetic. A number of practices had examined and attempted to treat him with no significant improvement over the last few months.

He was a lovely quiet gelding and allowed us to swiftly start to rule out some of the potential causes of the lameness and we could build a problem list. On rectal exam there remained a very firm mass in the right side of the pelvis. The right scrotal incision was still discharging pus. Stifle x-rays revealed a large bone cyst in the medial femoral condyle. But, most importantly, we could feel some pain and crunching of bone in the hip region when we pulled his leg out to the side.

In horses this size with suspected fractures, x-rays of the hip and pelvis are exceedingly difficult if not impossible to acquire standing. Obviously, we did not want to give him a general anaesthetic again. Ultrasound can be very useful in these cases.



In this image you can see the hip joint and neck of the femur. There is a fragment or piece of bone broken off the rim of the big socket part of the hip joint. In this



next image of the rim of the hip joint it is apparent there are multiple fragments of bone along the rim of the socket (acetabulum). Pelvic fractures with rest and

time can heal quite well with one big exception. Those fractures which extend into the hip joint usually result in severe arthritis and severe long standing lameness and pain. In horses his size there are really no effective treatments available to us.

As well as a fractured hip joint, he also had a scirrhus cord extending into his abdomen, and a bone cyst. It was our view the cyst was likely unrelated to his current problems. Given he was nearly non weight bearing lame after so long a period, we decided euthanasia was the only option.

We wish all our family and friends as well as all who help and support us at WEV a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

All the WEV team

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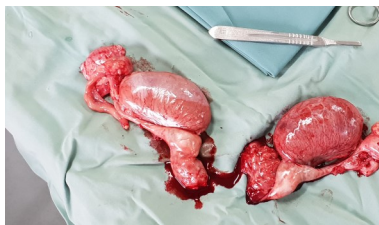
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Our goal is to provide excellence in clinical service to all our equine patients.

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



Mack was a donkey we were privileged to meet recently. Mick had been out to examine him and made the unusual diagnosis of bilaterally retained testes, something we see commonly in horses but rarely in donkeys. He was the first donkey to grace our operating facility at Lona when he came for castration. Not only were the testicles retained but there was an unusual vascular dilation a bit similar to varicose veins present in the blood supply to the testes.

Fortunately all went well for Mack and he is recovering without complication back at his home in Stant-horpe despite being quite unique!

