

**Newsletter**

**Practice news**

**Dental Cases, EOTRH**

**Preputial Melanomas**

We are now well into December and despite the ongoing severe weather conditions have managed to keep very busy. Whilst breeding numbers are substantially down in our practice, the ongoing flow of general, lameness and surgical cases have keep us on our toes.

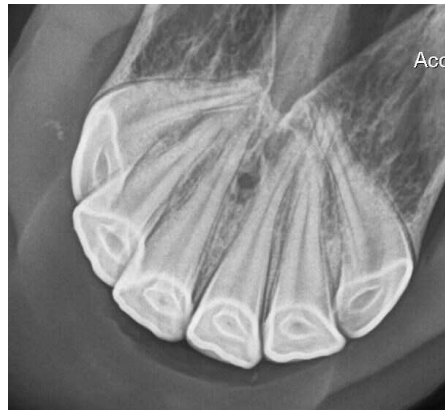
With the very dry conditions and the variable quality of feed being offered to horses we have seen a marked increase in colic and choke cases. Mostly we have been able to resolve these relatively easily but a few recent cases have been more problematic and reinforced to us the importance of Hendra virus vaccination. Choke (dysphagia) and colic (abdominal pain) are both clinical signs which are often seen with clinical Hendra cases. Until we can be sure the colic or choke is not due Hendra virus infection (which often requires a prolonged wait until we get results back from the lab in Brisbane) treatment of more complicated cases of choke and colic is problematic. It is very distressing to all our staff, vets and nurses, to have to wait for laboratory confirmation of Hendra status in some of these cases, and obviously in some cases the wait can adversely effect the outcomes for the horses. We always do as much as we safely can in these cases, but some procedures and surgeries just can't be safely performed until we can be sure the clinical signs are not due to Hendra virus.

We have seen a few cases recently of a dental condition commonly known as EOTRH. This acronym stands for Equine Osteoclastic Tooth Resorption and Hyperplasia. This condition has probably been occurring in the horse population for some time, however, we have only really started forming an understanding of it in the last 10 years or so. The disease is characterised by changes in the roots of teeth with bone loss and new bone and

subsequent dental pain and often tooth instability.



To the left is a magnified photo of the gum above an incisor tooth of a horse. The tooth is at the bottom of the photo and the blue arrow points to where there has been discharging of infection associated with



a diseased tooth root.

Above is an x ray of a recent case. This horse had multiple purple to deep red regions on the gums a few centimetres from the tooth margin in the upper jaw. Although a relatively mild case of recent onset, it is possible to appreciate the "furriness" around the tooth roots with a loss of the sharp and defined outline to the teeth which is apparent when teeth are healthy.

This disease is seen more commonly in older horses and the horse above was still relatively young. Generally, once the disease is well established the only solution is to extract the effected teeth, however, in this early case we have tried to manage the condition in a more conservative manner. We will need to monitor the progression or improvement carefully and this will be done by repeating the x-rays at regular intervals.

Not all times when we have evidence of discharging around a tooth root does this mean this condition. Sometimes it may be due to infection of the root, or fracture with secondary infection or a whole range of other conditions.

We had another case recently in a warm blood stallion which on first appearance looked very similar to the discharging tracts in the gums seen with EOTRH as described above. Close examination revealed something quite different.

In this case the x-rays painted quite a different picture. As you can see in the x-rays only one tooth appears involved and on the second (lateral) view the underlying cause becomes more apparent. It is not unusual for horses to grab onto something hard, and at the same time get a fright, doing damage to their incisor

teeth. As you can see, red arrow, there is a callosus of bone of forming over the tooth. This tooth has been nearly knocked out and fractured the bone around the tooth root, which is healing by second intention. This tooth would have been lose for a while, and during this time became infected as well. A long course of antibiotics was our first line of treatment, and if we are lucky the infection will resolve and the tooth become more stable as the tooth socket heals.



Sometimes these fractures are so severe it necessitates removal of the tooth or teeth and while these can still do well we usually try to preserve the teeth where possible.

This will be the last Newsletter for the year and all of us wish to extend our best wishes and Seasons Greetings to all associated with our practice. It has been a great year for WEV and this is in no small part to the many clients who entrust us with the care of their horses.

From all of the WEV team, including our practice PR dog Nellie (pictured below recovering from abdominal surgery in our airconditioned office)



# 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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*Melanomas in horses can take many forms. The most common form we see are multiple grey to black masses on older grey horses. These usually benign tumours have several predilection sites on these horses including under the tail, perineum and around the angle of the jaw.*

*They may occur anywhere though. This is a*

*case of a much loved pony who was referred for treatment of extensive mel-*



*anomas associated with his penis and prepuce. As you can see above as we were starting the cleaning before surgery there were very many masses and they extended most of the way round the prepuce. To the left you can see some of the extensive skin and tumour mass which required removal. When removing such a lot of tissue from the penis and pre-*

*puce problems often occur with post operative oedema and swelling and we did encounter some of that in this case. We persisted with careful topical treatments first at the clinic and later by a very dedicated owner we managed to resolve this. Unfortunately in these grey horses new melanomas are likely to form but usually the growth is very slow so we have a good chance of giving this gelding some years of quality life.*

