

**In the news: Should Vets use the courtesy title 'Doctor'?**

Back in December the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (the governing body of vets) decided to launch a public and profession wide consultation on whether vets should be able to use the courtesy title of 'Doctor.' It has caused fierce debate on both sides of the argument and the result will be announced in a few months after all opinions have been considered. Currently in the UK vets may append the letters MRCVS to their name, showing they are a Member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. In the majority of other countries around the world including most in Europe, vets already use the title 'Doctor,' which has led to confusion. It is argued for instance that in the same practice there may be a 'Dr Smith' and a 'Mr Smith' practicing as vets, 'Doctor Smith' qualified in another country, but to members of the public it may appear that he is more qualified than his untitled colleague. Currently, of all three medical degrees in the UK, (human medicine/dentistry/veterinary medicine) vet medicine is the only one which does not bestow the title of 'Doctor.' What is your opinion? Does it make a difference? Watch this space!


 **The Barn**

Welcome to the Spring edition of the newsletter, we hope you had a good Christmas and New year. As the hunting season draws to a close the show season is just beginning and we wish all our clients both four legged and two the best of luck in all the events they attend. At the practice we have had a steady start to the year with Zone days proving more popular than ever. Our waiting rooms at both surgeries have had a spruce up for Easter already, feel free to drop in and take a look at some of our new products. On the companion animal side we have started running puppy parties which have proved an immense success, we are now on our 4th party. For more information call or email the surgery. Finally, we are saying goodbye to one of our student veterinary nurses, Abigail Page, she is continuing her degree course at Harper Adams University. We wish her every success in the future and we are extremely grateful for all the help she has given.

**Horse Owners Needed for Ground Breaking Grass Sickness Trials**

Did you know that 60% of Grass Sickness cases occur between April and June? The Animal Health Trust in Newmarket are urging owners with horses on a yard which has had at least one case of Grass Sickness to come forward to help with vaccine trials.

To find out more about the vaccine trial or how to enrol horses and ponies, please visit the AHT's dedicated Grass Sickness website [www.equinegrasssickness.co.uk](http://www.equinegrasssickness.co.uk) or email [equinegrasssickness@aht.org.uk](mailto:equinegrasssickness@aht.org.uk).



**Suffolk Show**  
**Wed 27th**  
**&**  
**Thurs 28th**  
**May**  
 Trinity Park, Ipswich  
 Tickets on sale at  
[www.suffolkshow.co.uk](http://www.suffolkshow.co.uk)



# The Barn Veterinary Practice

## Equine Newsletter

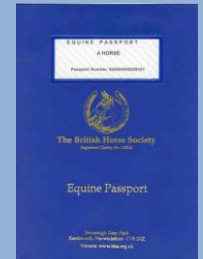
**Vaccinations and Passports**

Please can all clients remember to bring their passports when a vet is coming to see their horse. We are seeing an increasing number of horses without their passports when vaccinating. Although our computer system has a record of what vaccinations have been given, it is not fool proof. The only method of identifying which vaccine your horse is due, either influenza and tetanus or just influenza, is to look in their passport.

If in doubt, a vet will always give an influenza and tetanus vaccination to ensure your horses cover does not lapse. Unfortunately this is the more expensive of the two vaccinations.

**Save money - remember your horse's passport!**

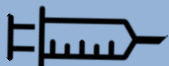
**We also have an increasing number of vaccine bottles + stickers left over to put in passports that were not present at the time of vaccination. If your horse's passport has a gap in it, and you know we retained their sticker, please bring it down to the surgery as soon as possible. A vet is usually on hand to sign and date the passport. We will shortly be clearing out our collection!**



**barnequine.copdock@zen.co.uk**  
**01473 730213**

# Hot Topic(s)

## Tetanus - Why Should I vaccinate my horse/donkey against Tetanus?



Tetanus is a disease caused by a neurotoxin produced by a bacterial caused *Clostridium tetani*. This bacteria is commonly found in soil among other places. Animals usually come in to contact with the bacteria after sustaining a wound.

Clinical signs associated with tetanus are muscle twitches, spasms and progressive paralysis of muscles, difficulty breathing and heart arrhythmias. In horses specifically, their ears often become erect, their tail stiff and extended and their nostrils become dilated.

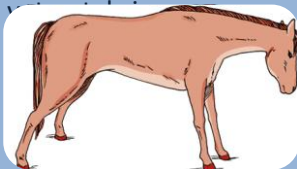
Walking, turning, and backing are difficult. Spasms of the neck and back muscles cause extension of the head and neck, while stiffness of the leg muscles causes a horse to assume a "sawhorse" stance. Sweating is also common.

Tetanus can very often be fatal if not treated early on in the course of disease. Treatment usually involves sedating the horse and most importantly, administering an anti-toxin injection. Anti-toxin injections are extremely expensive, so how can we prevent tetanus?

The easiest way to prevent tetanus is to vaccinate against it, which thankfully most owners do. Horses/ponies/donkeys can be vaccinated for tetanus alone, without the addition of an equine influenza component. Tetanus boosters are only needed every 2 years, with a primary course being 2 vaccinations a month apart, followed by re-vaccination after 17 months.

If your horse/pony/donkey is not yet covered for tetanus, we urge you to do so. To check your horse is already covered, look in their passport and see if they have had a vaccination within the last 2 years containing a tetanus toxoid. This is most likely written as 'Te' on the vaccine sticker. It is also extremely important that if ever your horse sustains a wound and you call a vet, you have their horses passport!

**Tetanus vaccination costs from as little as £29.00 (Feb'15)**



Typical "Saw Horse" stance

## Is your horse overweight?

Inevitably a controversial subject! Many horses are carrying a little more weight coming out of winter, usually due to less exercise and more time stabled. But what effect does obesity have on our horses?

- Increased risk of arthritis and muscle/tendon injuries due to more strain being put on joints and tissues.
- Difficulty regulating temperature due to insulating effect of fat, causing horses to sweat more during summer months.
- Proven links with obesity and laminitis, Cushing's Disease and Equine Metabolic Syndrome.
- Decreased oxygen intake due to increased body mass causing restriction in chest wall movement.
- Problems with fertility in breeding mares, difficulty giving birth and decreased milk production.

What can we do?

- EXERCISE!
- Feed hay instead of haylage
- Double net forage to prolong eating time
- Weigh out food - horses need roughly 1.5%-2.5% of their body weight in food daily, consisting mainly of forage. If they are grazing, reduce their feed!
- Strip graze in summer
- Use scoops instead of handfuls, this means food is measured more accurately
- Get a weigh tape and use it to monitor your horse's weight every fortnight, ideally.



Which horse is in ideal body condition?



**ASK THE PRACTICE FOR A WEIGH TAPE IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY GOT ONE**