



# Mayes & Scrine

## Equine Veterinary Practice

Newsletter: March 2006 Issue 4

### I want to breed from my mare...

This time of year, we have many enquiries regarding breeding. "Hobby" breeding should only be undertaken after serious consideration. Mares should not be bred for sentimental reasons or if they have a problem that could be passed on to the next generation (e.g. arthritis, navicular disease, poor conformation). One also has to be prepared to pay a stud to supervise the foaling or accept the stress and risks of foaling at home. Mammalian birth is a life threatening procedure and in equines it is possible (albeit rare) to lose the mare and the foal if things go wrong. After the birth, the nursing and the weaning, there's then three years of looking after a wild youngster, and homebreds are often the wildest, before having a useful animal.

Although it is possible to breed a mare, even a maiden mare, at any age, their fertility rates start to drop over 15 years old. The conformation of their genital tract is also a major fertility factor.

Choosing a stallion for your mare can be a difficult matter. They are advertised in horse magazines, posted on the internet and listed with Breed Societies. Recommendation by someone you trust is usually the best.

The most likely breeding methods available are natural and artificial insemination (AI). Natural covering in the presence of trained staff, although a potentially violent process, often gets good results. Professional studs with proven stallions and veterinary control can achieve pregnancy rates of 80%. If you select a stud and stallion for natural covering they are likely to request certain swabs and blood tests before the mare goes to stud. These can vary, so ask them specifically what is required (e.g. external and/or internal CEM and/or EVA blood test) before booking them in. Laboratory Certificates can take up to 10 days after the samples were taken and usually need to accompany the mare to stud.



If you select AI you have higher vet fees. This is in addition to the stud/semen fee. Your mare is often more likely to conceive if sent to the stud as fresh semen is the most fertile. Also, professional studs often have a stud vet on site everyday and can offer favourable veterinary packages, e.g. around £250 + VAT per insemination. Many offer grass livery. Many owners send their mares to stud for chilled AI, e.g. from Europe, for convenience and logistics.

At our practice, we offer chilled and frozen AI. Traditionally, chilled was thought to be more fertile than frozen, but variations in chilling techniques, hot weather and couriers mean that this is not necessarily the case. Knowing the viability of the stallion's semen and the reliability of the stud (from a source other than the stud) is extremely helpful. We charge £250+VAT per insemination, including all the scans and washouts. Courier fees (for semen transport) are extra. For the first time this year, we offer grass livery at £10/day (including bringing them in and preparing them for stocks/insemination/scans etc). If the mare is admitted to the clinic when she comes into season she is likely to be here for around 5 days. If a client insists on insemination at home then normal visit fees are charged in addition to the insemination fee.

We recommend a pre-breeding examination, including swabs and a scan (even biopsy in problem mares) prior to AI. This costs £80+VAT if they are brought in (including lab fees, not biopsy). We also recommend pregnancy scans at 14, 24, 32 days. These are £38.50 +VAT each.

The average mare should be pregnant in one or two inseminations (seasons). If not they can be considered potentially infertile or "problem" mares: this doesn't mean that they won't get pregnant, just that much more veterinary intervention may be required and the cost can escalate.

To a person who has not bred before, all of this can be a little overwhelming. We are more than happy, by appointment, to meet you at the practice to discuss it all and show you our facilities.

### Booking an Appointment

Office hours 8am – 5pm Monday to Friday.

Please always ring the office to make an appointment. We try to be as flexible as possible. If you wish to request a specific vet or morning/lunchtime/afternoon we will try to accommodate you (please try to give us a few days notice in this case). We only make specific timed appointments in advance if a third party is involved, e.g. a farrier, physiotherapist etc. On the morning of your appointment please ring the office 8-9am and we will give you a time window for the visit, usually one hour, – also the vets are always happy to give you a ring when they are on their way.

Outside office hours please always ring the surgery – the number of the vet on call will be on the answer phone.

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### Office Hours:

Monday to Friday 8am til 5pm  
24 hours emergency care and access to urgent advice.  
Please ring the office number in the first instance.

### Contact Details:

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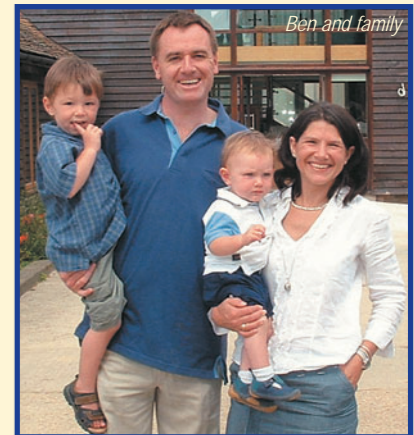
### Happy New Year!

As I write, we're still in the grip of a rather cold winter, so I feel the blue background is justified. Many thanks to all of you who sent us cards, and presents, for Christmas.

Despite the cold, or perhaps even because of it, dare I say that it's been a relatively healthy equine winter. The dry weather prevented much of the disease and illness that we usually experience: such as colic, lymphangitis, mud fever, pus-in-foot, rain scald...even Strangles. However, there was a notable number of laminitis cases, particularly after a few days of milder weather.

We are now established as a four vet equine team: myself, Judy, Laurence and Anna. Hopefully, this means we can be more flexible, accessible and reliable whilst retaining a personal and, of course, professional service.

As the lighter mornings and evenings return I wish you all the very best in your equestrian endeavours.



### Spring Talk: 8pm Tuesday 4th April Hurtwood Polo Club, Ewhurst

Our autumn talk, last November, was a huge success. Thanks to all those that came. Claire, our pharmacy manager and lay nurse, spoke knowledgably and entertainingly about her trip to Gambia with The Horse and Donkey Trust. Fiona Doubleday elucidated the craft of equine physiotherapy and Anna Hammond, our internal medicine-certified vet, demonstrated the dark art of 21st century lecturing: using multitasked video, graphics and gadgetry to dazzle us with the wonders (and failures) of the equine respiratory system.



Hurtwood Park Polo Clubhouse is an amazing venue. Kenny Jones, the members present and the staff, made us most welcome. As Ewhurst is quite central in the practice we will continue hosting our twice-yearly talks there.

**So don't miss our Spring Talk...** "What to do before the vet arrives" will be Judy's debut lecture. Laurence will update us all on "Laminitis – overview, recent developments and grass management". Anna will talk on "Colic – cause, treatment and prevention". Laminitis and colic are perhaps the top two problems in our practice and can strike anywhere at anytime, so please do come along and catch up with the latest thinking. Please let us know if you intend to attend and/or need directions

### British Equine Veterinary Association Trust Horseowners' Day: Thursday 27th April 9am-5pm Wolverhampton Racecourse

We hope to be organising a trip to this seminar day, £35 including lunch. The morning session on "Buying a Horse" will be attended by HRH The Princess Royal. It will include presentations on conformation, vettings, insurance and owners' responsibilities. The afternoon session will be on "Maintaining a Horse": hidden costs, first aid, fitness and training, the role of farriery and feeding for performance and health. We suspect places will be extremely limited, so let us know ASAP if you want to come. We will arrange transport when we know numbers.

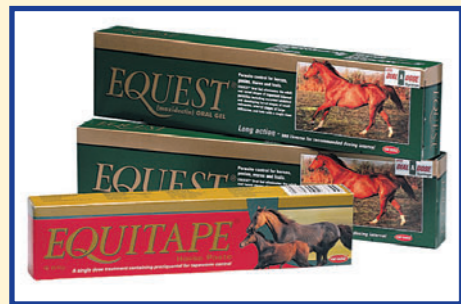


## Low Intensity Worming

For sometime now, the Practice has been recommending a Strategic Worming Programme based on manufacturer's guidelines.

An example of this would be Equest (moxidectin) quarterly and Equitape (praziquantel) biannually. This is a "blitz" approach to worming and is very effective at eliminating worm related problems, e.g. colic, weight loss and diarrhoea.

We still strongly recommend a Strategic Worming Programme in an intensive management environment, such as a livery or competition yard. The horses should all be wormed at the same time and new horses should be wormed and tapewormed on arrival. New horses with an unknown recent worming history should be treated with a low intensity wormer, e.g. pyrantel (Strongid-P, Pyratape). We recommend use of modern



wormers: it has been shown that many types of equine worms are resistant to the older wormers, such as the benzimidazoles (Panacur and Telmin). It is recommended that horses are kept in for 48 hours after worming, for environmental reasons.

In a static horse population, i.e. where the same horses live together on the same land with little change, then a less intensive programme can be considered, especially if the dung is regularly removed from the paddocks. Modern wormers are very toxic. For example, avermectins in field run-off is very dangerous to fish. Also, dogs can die if they eat Equest wormer and Equitape should be washed off after contact with human skin.

In a closed equine community we are happy to recommend:

- Regularly picking up dung, e.g. twice weekly. This is good for the grass too.
- Twice yearly worming with a modern wormer.
- Annual treatment for tapeworm.



- Faecal Worm Egg Counts and annual Tapeworm blood tests. For example, worm egg counts three months after a worming.

This less interventionist programme would not compromise the health of most horses, although worming frequency may have to be increased if the tests show up worms or tapeworms. Fresh dung in a plastic bag at the practice by noon (we must know that you are coming by 10am) can be examined for worm eggs at a cost of £10 + VAT.

Horses can be blood tested for tapeworm at a cost of Visit + £35 + VAT. Although slightly controversial, one could test a sample of the horses, e.g. two of four.

If you require more information about a Health Plan for your yard (including vaccination, health checks and/or teeth), please speak to one of the vets at the practice.

## What's in a Vetting...

The Pre-Purchase Examination, or "Vetting", is a stalwart of veterinary practice. Assessing anything before buying can be quite taxing even it is new. Horses are second hand, well used goods and have no service history. Everyone complains about the vetting procedure (normally the seller), but the fact that "to vet" something is engrained in the english language must mean we've got something right.

A full Five Stage examination is always recommended. We currently charge £145 (exVAT) plus the visit (£17 to Warnham, £250 to Gloucestershire). It takes around one and a half hours. It includes a full visual, physical, oral and ophthalmic examination, examining the feet, trot up, flexion tests, seeing ridden, stethoscope examination before and after strenuous exercise, a rest period, repeat trot up, turn, back-up and lunge-on-the-hard. A blood test is taken for storage and passports are checked.

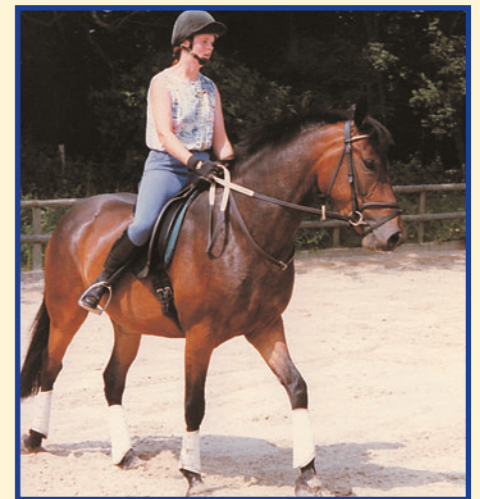
If the buyer is not going to be present the vet tries very hard to speak to them beforehand regarding the horse's intended use and their experience, so suitability can be assessed. If the examination turns up something very concerning then the vet likes to be able to speak to the buyer straightaway. The vetting can then be stopped and less money charged.

Although we are not horse valuers, we each do around fifty vettings a year so we do get some idea of the market. The price usually reflects the stamp of the horse, if it doesn't we feel we should let the buyer know. It is courteous for the vet to speak to the seller regarding any adverse findings. Contrary to popular belief, we can vet a horse when the seller and buyer are existing clients.

Obviously we are acting on behalf of the buyer and any conflict of interest only occurs if the seller gets upset. Therefore, we make it clear that failure is an option before we start. All findings of veterinary significance have to be listed on the vetting certificate, it is negligent of the vet not to do so. This often concern buyers as it can lead to insurance exclusions. Exclusions just mean that you have to take a risk on the excluded part of the horse. The insurance company will usually lift an exclusion after a suitable period (e.g. at renewal). Our advice is not to sit on an exclusion for year after year, and don't miss buying the horse you want just because an insurance company won't insure a small part of a big animal.

If the horse is expensive, e.g. over £10,000, then x-rays can be considered. Often insurance companies request x-rays over and above this value too (check with them before the vetting, they also often request certain views). X-rays may also be recommended if the vetting turns up something unusual, like a bony lump or swollen joint.

Two Stage examinations can be done. These are shorter and more limited than a Five Stage exam. Also, the Practice's indemnity insurers insist that the buyer signs a consent



form acknowledging the limitations of the procedure. Because of the increased indemnity risk we charge £90+VAT for a two stage vetting.

When booking a vetting, the office staff take all the details, and help you arrange a time for the vet, seller and buyer to attend. Often the buyer doesn't know the name of the seller or the horse and has forgotten where the place is! If the buyer is not attending, the vet will ring them on the way to the vetting. When the buyer is not an existing client we will ask for credit or debit card details.

Although none of us can gaze into a crystal ball, a thorough, methodical and professional examination can assist you in avoiding the pitfalls of horse buying. Knowing the buyer as a client (their ability, personality and requirements) can add an extra dimension to the process. Judging by the number of vettings we do, most of you agree.



## Changes in Pharmacy Law

November 2005 saw big changes in veterinary pharmacy law in the UK. This was after an extensive DTI (government) investigation into this "closed" market.

Drug prices (including wormers) are significantly higher in the UK than in most of the rest of Europe, e.g. Eire and the near continent. This had been encouraging animal owners (and even some vets) to "illegally" import drugs from abroad. Perhaps a single EU licensing system would have been the best way forward!

The new Regulations have tried to open up the veterinary drug market to competition and has also led to reclassification of some drugs. To comply with these Regulations (and the law) vets now have to:

1. List their "top 10" drugs and prices in the waiting room (in the car too?).
2. Advise as to the cost of procedures and drugs at the time of dispensing.
3. Offer Prescriptions free of charge. These can be taken to a pharmacist, including on-line pharmacies in the UK.

4. Always use drugs licensed for use in that species (the horse) if one is available. If not, the client must sign an unlicensed drug consent form and an animal drug has to be used if one is available.
5. Human drugs can only be used if an appropriate animal drug is not available.
6. Drugs can only be dispensed or prescribed for animals directly under the care of the practice. This means that they have to be seen regularly: e.g. every six months.

Practically, the prescription system is only likely to be useful for long term medication, although often our prices are quite competitive (e.g. Pergolide, used to treat Cushing's Disease) even compared with on-line pharmacies. Under what is called the "cascade" system, we can not now dispense or prescribe ACP tablets (oral sedative) as these are only licensed for use in dogs and an



equine equivalent (Sedalin Gel, Sedazine Paste) is available. We have to use cat and dog pills, e.g. Prednisolone 5mg tablets, and not human B.P. tablets.

Repeat drugs can only be dispensed or prescribed by the practice if the animal has been seen by a vet in the last six months. Medicines can only be dispensed after being checked by a vet, we therefore request 24 hours notice if you are coming to pick up a drug: it is illegal for our staff to dispense a drug if it has not been checked and signed for by one of the vets. Medicines can be dropped off or sent by post, although we charge for these services. Please note, we cannot send liquids or aerosols.



## Our Website: [www.equinevetpractice.co.uk](http://www.equinevetpractice.co.uk) OR [www.mayesandscrine.co.uk](http://www.mayesandscrine.co.uk)

I can only apologise for the lack of information on these sites: in fact there is zero. We are endeavouring to correct this NOW. Perhaps I have been too ambitious, or perhaps overawed, with the limitless possibilities of the internet. I have now come back down to earth and we are devising a useful information service for our loyal clients: one

that can be regularly updated, tell you what we do and how we do it, where we are and where we are going, and our professional opinions on problems and conditions affecting the horses and ponies in Surrey and Sussex. I hereby pledge that this service will be available, at least in some form, by 1st May 200...6.