

BIGGER AND BETTER PREMISES AT BELL EQUINE

We are pleased to report that the building work is moving ahead at our equine hospital. There is now a roof on the extension. We hope to move into the new offices before the busy summer season starts. We will have a separate office for the accounts and practice management and a larger waiting room area and reception for you to visit.

As part of the new office and accommodation complex we are building a new laboratory equipped with state-of-the-art haematology, microbiology, cytology and biochemistry processing equipment, providing full support for both our 'on the road' and hospital vets.

With this equipment and the accompanying expertise, we can run almost all lab tests in house rather than posting them off elsewhere, which takes more time and adds additional costs. This usually means we can provide a same day service. This is especially useful for critically ill patients and allows us to update treatment protocols, by the hour in some cases. The lab is run by our full time technician Gemma Latter, who has now worked at Bell Equine for several years and is shown here with her own horse enjoying some time off from doing lab tests.



Gemma obtained a first class degree at Hadlow before coming to work with us and has been recently been expanding her laboratory knowledge by studying at Beaufort Cottage Laboratories in Newmarket.



Strongyle (red worm) egg as seen on a worm egg count down the microscope.

WORM EGG COUNTS

As part of our new lab facility we have developed a new and improved method of running worm egg counts for our patients. The faecal worm egg count is an effective way to test for equine worms (including redworms and ascarids). It is a relatively simple procedure that requires a small amount of input from the horse owner.

With the new test we need you to provide a small amount of your horse's droppings, normally about 10g - less than one dollop! The sample should be as fresh as possible and is best taken to the clinic rather than posted, especially in the summer. Samples should be collected into a resealable container, like a plastic sandwich bag, and need to be labelled clearly with the animal's name and owners' details. If you are collecting samples from numerous horses (more than 5), it is best to book in advance with our receptionists as processing a whole yard's worth of samples is time-consuming.

We will examine each sample individually under a microscope and then telephone you with an accurate report regarding the number of worm eggs present, and explain what this means and how to treat any worm burden that has been found. By checking a number of horses in a yard in this way and by running blood tests for tapeworms we can tell you the best way to manage worm control in any individual stable yard.

Often these tests will show that treatment is not required. The heavy use of wormers over the past 20 years has unfortunately led to a significant amount of worm resistance, which means that there is



Julian Samuelson checking for worm eggs.

a risk that some wormers are no longer effective on some yards. By monitoring the faecal worm egg counts of all horses on a yard at regular intervals over the year, it is possible to target the use of wormers to only the horses that actually need treatment - this will substantially reduce the risk of further resistance developing among the worms in those horses, and in many cases will save money by avoiding unnecessary worming. If you are interested in using this 'targeted' method of worm control, please ring us on **01622 813700**.

We can also use faecal worm egg counts to assess the presence and severity of parasite resistance on your yard. By running worm egg count tests 10-14 days after worming, we can see how effective the wormer has been at killing the worms. In theory, all of the eggs should have gone. This is known as the 'faecal worm egg count reduction test'.

To help you get the worm menace under control on the spring grass, we are running a **special offer** on worm egg counts. We now charge **£8.50** per individual worm egg count and **£6.25** per sample for more than 5 samples. This fee includes our vets and trained nurses advising you on the best way to worm your horses using our individual knowledge of your horses and where they are kept, as well as awareness of all the worming products available and the risks of complications such as wormer resistance.

BELL EQUINE VET CLINIC

Mereworth, Maidstone, Kent ME18 5GS

For **general enquiries and all visits**,
Tel: 01622 813700

For **hospital appointments**,
please phone Linda Loines on
01622 816032 or 01622 813700

For **account queries**, please contact
Pat Oram on 01622 816033 or 01622 816036

STAFF NEWS

Nurses Passing Exams

We are delighted to congratulate 3 of our equine nurses: **Jo Gregory**, **Matt Legg** and **Terri Malyon**, who passed their final exams at the beginning of the year. We now have a whole team of fully qualified and highly trained equine veterinary nurses to look after your horses. We believe we hold the record for the highest number of qualified equine veterinary nurses at any equine hospital in the country and we are justly proud of them!



From left to right: Nurses Terri Malyon, Matt Legg and Jo Gregory celebrating their exam successes.

Reception

We have now completed the expansion of our reception team and have 3 very capable full time staff available to organise our appointments and answer all your questions. The reception team is led by **Gaynor Osborne-Leeds**, who has been ably assisted by **Rachael Butler** since last year. We now welcome our new receptionist **Anna Taylor**, who started at the beginning of January. Our receptionists are your first point of contact with Bell Equine and are ready to respond to everything from emergencies to exports and all the other excitements encountered on a daily basis at Bell Equine!



From left to right: Rachael Butler, Gaynor Osborne-Leeds and Anna Taylor.

BREEDING FROM YOUR MARE

Spring is finally here and our first foals have arrived. It is the time to start deciding which mares to put in-foal and what stallions to use. At Bell Equine we offer a comprehensive breeding service from first foal checks through to artificial insemination (AI) packages.

We had a successful 2007 AI season and are looking forward to an ever better 2008! Two of our nurses (Kelly and Vikki) are now also fully-trained AI technicians; this will lead to a more efficient service with the ability to receive a greater number of mares into our AI programme.

This year we have devised AI packages that include 3–5 days of hospitalisation, all ultrasound scans, the insemination, follow-up ovulation scans and the first 15 day pregnancy check; this package worked well last year and we feel inclusion of a 15 day pregnancy scan performed at Bell Equine makes it an extremely competitive package.

Costs (before VAT) are:

- AI frozen £395 including 5 days hospitalisation.
- AI frozen repeat £295 including 5 days hospitalisation.
- AI chilled £265 including 3 days hospitalisation (or plus visit fees if done at home).
- AI chilled repeat £235 including 3 days hospitalisation (also plus visit fees).

Artificial insemination with frozen semen requires a much higher level of veterinary input due to the short life of the thawed sperm. In addition, the use of frozen semen carries a lower success rate. Mares for chilled AI can also be managed at home.

Once the decision has been made to breed from your mare and you have picked the stallion you wish to use, we advise you book your mare in for a pre-breeding examination. This can be done at the clinic or we can include it in a routine visit. This would also be the ideal time to take a CEM swab and an EVA blood sample - all mares included into the AI program should have these tests completed for venereal disease control.

The 2 key decisions that need to be made by owners are: which month you wish to put your mare in foal and which stallion you wish to use. Contact us when you have made your plans or need advice. We will then take the stallion and stud information so that we can liaise with the stud on your behalf and remove the added stress of ordering your own semen!



Catherine Seagroatt has put theory into practice by breeding from her own mare, seen here.

After insemination we will make an appointment for the 15-day pregnancy scan. We recommend 2 further scans, (at 24–27 days and at 35–40 days) to monitor the early pregnancy. These are not included in our AI package but are important to detect early problems that may occur.

Please contact Catherine Seagroatt on 01622 813700 if you are interested.

THE IMPORTANT SMALL PRINT

Insurance

We recommend the benefits of insurance to cover veterinary fees for horses, although we cannot give any recommendations regarding individual insurance companies. If you do have insurance, you need be aware that the insurance companies will take advantage of our prompt payment discount scheme, even if you do not pay in time to receive the discount offered.

We recommend that all the paperwork is completed promptly regarding any insurance claim. This means bringing your claim form with you when we start to treat your horse or submitting the paperwork to us as soon as possible thereafter and please pay any excess fee straightaway. Also, we will do our best to complete the claim forms and return them to you or directly to your insurers promptly. In that way claims can be processed and payment organised as soon as possible. Recently we have found that delays mean that some clients loose out financially and we want to help you avoid that.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ring our reception on **01622 813700** or accounts office on **01622 816033**, where all our staff are experienced in dealing with insurance issues and can help you sort out your claim queries.

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