



## COMPETING HORSES IN THE SUMMER

The summer heat can be dangerous to horses, especially when it is made worse by high humidity. Horses can become dehydrated, lethargic and generally reluctant to work. Severe heat stress can cause colic, diarrhoea or collapse, so it is important to keep your horse cool. Young, old and ill horses are more vulnerable and must be monitored carefully.

We often get asked about whether its safe to compete through the summer and in the hot weather. The short answer is simply that every horse is different and you know your horse the best. However please see our top tips for a safe competition below.

### WATER

A 500kg horse needs to drink 25 Litres of water daily in normal weather. This only increases when the weather becomes warmer and your horse loses more water through sweating. Make sure you pack ample water for what your horse (and you) needs. Horse should always have plain water. Allow unrestricted drinking right up until competing, during breaks in warm-up and immediately after exercise. Avoid very cold or very warm water as whilst these do no harm, horses prefer water around 15-25°C. When travelling away from home we would always say take water, not only to ensure that you have a supply but also some horses only like the flavour of water they're used to.

### TRAVELLING

Like exercise try to avoid travelling in the hottest time of the day, between 10am and 4pm. If this can't be avoided, try to maximise ventilation in your lorry or trailer by opening any windows or vents. If you are travelling in the day wet your horse down thoroughly and take some spare cold water, portable fans and if necessary, a small generator to run them. If you get stuck and cannot take the horse out wetting the horse and using the fans will make a huge difference. Provide water before and after travelling and if travelling for over 2 hours consider stopping halfway to offer your horse some water.

### EXERCISE

Firstly, modify your warm-up. Divide warm-up into shorter periods and cool in between. e.g. 3 x 15 min instead of 45min constant.

Once finished you must cool your horse off. Rapid cooling should be done by covering as much of the horses body with as much cool (15-25°C/59°F-77°F) or cold (<15°C/59°F) water as quickly as possible without stopping to scrape. The colder the water the less you will have to use and the quicker the horse will cool. This should be done continuously for at least several minutes. If the horse is agitated or appears to be recovering the horse can then be given a short walk before another period of several minutes intensive cooling. This should be continued until the horses blowing (deep/laboured breathing) has subsided and or the horse appears more comfortable. This may take 10-15min or longer.

If shade and or fans are available these can be used but water cooling over the horse is the priority. Do not rely on cooling blankets/rugs, evaporative coolers or fans as the main means of cooling. These provide comfort but NOT rapid cooling. Ice packs placed over large veins are ineffective at cooling.

Finally use as much shade as possible throughout the day to keep you both cool. If you would like to find out more please speak to your vet.



## LAMINITIS PACKAGE

Through July we will be continuing to support our clients with our Laminitis Package. For £175.00 a vet and vet tech will visit you; we will weigh your horse/pony with the weighbridge, take ACTH bloods, body condition score and also take front x-rays. This package is designed to help you (and us) monitor your laminitis risk and hopefully put a plan in place for you prior to their being any issues. Call us today to see what appointments we still have available.





## WE NEED YOUR HELP

The Royal Veterinary College (RVC) has launched a new survey aimed at horse owners to gather information to help understand more about the quality of life in adult and older horses and ponies.

The research is aimed at developing an assessment tool to measure the quality of life in equines affected by a common hormone disease called Pituitary Pars Intermedia Dysfunction (PPID), commonly known as Equine Cushing's disease. As part of the CVS Group, we are supporting this valuable research. At Severn Edge we have a number of lovely horses and ponies that are PPID positive and it would be great to get you involved.

### SO WHAT IS PPID:

Equine Cushing's disease is more correctly known as pituitary pars intermedia dysfunction (PPID). It involves the pituitary gland, which is a gland located at the base of the brain that produces hormones in response brain signals. In PPID, the normal mechanisms which control hormone production by the pituitary gland are damaged so that the inhibitory part is lost. Thus, there is excessive production of the normal hormones from the pituitary. These hormones then enter the circulation and affect the whole body. Clinical signs include increased coat length and delayed shedding of the winter coat, laminitis, lethargy, increased sweating, weight loss, increased risk of infection (immuno compromise) and excessive drinking/ urinating.

The disease primarily affects those over the age of 10, with 19 being the average age at diagnosis. It can be quite prevalent in aged equine populations. research has led us to believe that PPID can occur in over 20% of horses aged over 15 years. Ponies are more likely to be affected than horses, but mares and geldings are equally likely to be affected, with no significant breed disposition.

Whether or not your horse or pony has PPID, we would welcome your responses and encourage you to complete the survey to support this research. Please share with or tag your horse-owning friends. Thank you.

If you would like to learn more about this project, further information is provided in the survey introduction. Please head to the link that follows to complete a short survey : <https://rvc.uk.com/PPID-2023-cvs>

## SAVE UP TO £150 ON YOUR HORSE'S PREVENTATIVE HEALTH CARE

The Horse Health Programme is a preventative health care plan saving you up to £150 on veterinary care. It is suitable for all horses, ponies and donkeys. Our competitively priced horse health plan includes more products and services than any other national scheme. The Horse Health Programme will enable you to proactively organise your horse's health with regular reminders.

For just £13.99 per month, or £155.88 per year (saving £12).

Our health plan has been carefully designed with the cost conscious owner in mind enabling you to budget for your horse's care by spreading the cost of preventive health treatments over 12 months. The programme offers further discounts including 10% off all veterinary treatments and 20% off selected lifetime care medicines. To find out more or sign up today please call 01584 841 080.

