



# Ark Vet Centre

## Equine Newsletter



❄️ December 2025 ❄️

Welcome to the December Newsletter, with Christmas fast approaching the weather has been so wet, with the fields saturated a lot of horses are spending more time inside. We've seen a few colics due to changes in routine as well as some of our older patients struggling with stiffness in the colder weather. Before we get any deeper into winter now's a good time to check that our older horses and ponies are coping and maintaining their weight well before the next few months of winter.

### Is your horse a healthy weight?

**Start with a Body Condition Score (BCS)** - Use a weigh tape to get an estimation of body weight and have a feel of fat coverage on the ribs, neck and hindquarters to estimate a BCS. Keeping a diary is really useful so you can build up a picture of how your horse is doing over subsequent weeks and monitor trends.

**Make diet changes early** - Don't wait until winter hits to make dietary changes. For underweight horses or those prone to losing condition, consider adding extra fibre-based calories now to build reserves before colder weather increases energy demands.

**Rugging and Clipping** - These can influence how many calories your horse uses to keep warm. Unclipped horses with a natural winter coat often manage fine without heavy rugs, which can help with weight management. For older or lean horses, however, rugs can help conserve valuable calories

**Regular monitoring** - Continue to weigh tape and body score every few weeks. It's much



Easier to adjust a feeding plan gradually when a drop in weight is first noticed than to play catch up later in the season.

### Other Winter reminders...

#### Winter Laminitis

We've not had too many frosty mornings as yet this winter but over the coming weeks we are likely to see more frost lying. In horses and ponies that are



prone to laminitis or have Cushings or Equine Metabolic Syndrome (EMS) its crucial that you avoid turning them out onto frosty grass as its very likely to be high in sugar. Every winter we see cases of laminitis especially when we have prolonged cold spells where the grass is frosty for many days in a row. Turn out in the afternoons should be ok but if the frost lies all day then they are better kept in.

#### Winter Colic

Often a combination of icy/cold water, and being stabled more can lead to a rise in colic cases. Horses generally don't like drinking cold water and over winter if horses are stabled more they tend to eat more hay and much less grass than they do over the summer. These factors can lead to dehydration and a drier gut contents making impactions much more likely. Offering warm water, soaking hay, and offering wet soupy meals can all help to reduce the risk of colic.



As ever, We are always available on the end of the phone for advice or to discuss any concerns you may have with your horses and ponies.

Finally, All of us here at Ark Vet Centre wish you a Happy Christmas!

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