

ANNUAL HEALTH & THERAPY DIRECTORY

Tiny mites that cause big problems

Of all the parasites that infest horses, mites can be the most difficult to get rid of.

Broadly speaking, mites fall into two categories: skin surface mites and burrowing mites. These pests are usually too small to be seen with the naked eye but the host damage and reaction is easily recognised. They cause irritation which usually means that the horses stamp their hind limbs, chew at their fore limbs, rub their legs on each other or on the stable or fence posts. Badly affected horses frequently have thickened skin and scabs, particularly around the pasterns, and some horses develop bleeding sores and secondary bacterial infection which can cause lameness and swollen legs. However, it's not only the legs that are affected since other species of mite can cause itchiness and skin lesions on other parts of the body such as the face and neck.

Itch or mange mites burrow just beneath the skin making slender winding tunnels up to an inch long. The fluid discharge at the tunnel opening dries to form nodules and these mites secrete an extremely irritating toxin that, when combined with the tunnelling, cause extreme host reactions and itching often with the skin scuffing off in the infested area. The female mite dies after laying about 20 eggs in the tunnel and these hatch in 3 to 10 days to become microscopic 6-legged nymphs. These become 8-legged after one moult and in two more

moult they reach maturity. The males die after mating and the females begin new tunnels 10 to 30 days after hatching from eggs. Infested animals rub and scratch continuously in areas of the head, back or base of the tail and become inflamed and scurfy with only a scatter of hairs remaining.

The other type of mite which can cause chorioptic mange are very similar to itch mites except they don't burrow into the skin. Chorioptic mites live on the skin's surface where they feed and have a similar life cycle to the itch mite often producing lesions and mange in the areas of the hocks, knees and pasterns. Infested horses are restless and often seen biting or licking the lower legs where severe infestation can cause lameness.

There are basically 3 reasons why mites are so difficult to get rid of:- the first is that they tend to infest mainly horses that are heavily feathered and are therefore very difficult to get at in the deep hair. The second is that at least one kind of mite burrows beneath the horse's skin which once again makes them difficult to reach, and the third (probably the most significant

reason) is that they have quite a rapid life cycle. This means that even if you can kill the mature mites, within a week or two they're back again because their eggs (laid under the skin or in the deep hair) hatch out and reinfest the horse.

In pioneering a new approach to mite infestation, Fine Fettle Feeds has developed a naturally occurring and powerful anti-feedant which fundamentally prevents insects from biting. "Fly Gon" combines with the natural oils of a horse's skin to form a mildly alkaline compound which helps any bites or stings to heal more rapidly and more importantly, being strongly alkaline, it interferes with the biting mechanism by which the mites cause damage. The biting mechanism of these parasitic species is essentially an acid-driven reaction, acid being extruded in the biting apparatus of the mite. When this comes into contact with an alkaline, it is neutralised and this function prevents the mite from biting. In the absence of an ability to feed, the parent mites die off and if "Fly Gon" is continuously applied or at least regularly applied over a two week period, this kills off all the new moults which are produced when the eggs hatch out.



This still leaves the problem of being able to get at the mites in order to dose them. Fly Gon comes with a very handy and powerful pump spray so that by parting the feathering and directing the spray on to the skin, the mites can be got at! However, several applications are necessary in order that the alkaline compound which results from the mixing of the "Fly Gon" with the natural oils in the horse's skin, be allowed to build up on the skin to the extent where it can inhibit mite feeding so a daily dose is recommended for the first fortnight.

To find out more, and read some of the testimonials from satisfied customers, visit www.finefettlefeed.com

Camrosa Ointment

Does your horse suffer from the effects of mites? Are the legs itchy, red, sore and scabby?

Camrosa Ointment is an effective water repellent barrier against mites. It soothes itchy, irritated skin and promotes the natural healing process. For further information contact Camrosa Equestrian Ltd on **01892 783240** or visit their Website: www.camrosa.co.uk



Before Camrosa

After Camrosa

Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD) and Deep Oscillation for Equines



MLD can be an effective treatment for lymphoedema

Manual lymphatic drainage (MLD) is widely used on the Continent as an effective form of treatment for a wide range of conditions. In Germany the MLD therapist and the Veterinary Surgeons work as a team together – the vet diagnosing the condition and suggesting MLD to the clients – whilst the therapist treats the horse. The therapy is currently used for: Reduction of swelling (oedema) and reducing pain in tendon injuries; Reduction in swelling from concussive injury (bruising) and haematomas; Reduction in volume (combined with decongestive therapy) for

swollen legs and lymphoedema; The treatment of laminitis to decrease susceptibility to further attacks; Reduction in swelling from post-operative causes (castration, colic operations); Increased healing rate of ulcers, proud skin, wounds and burns; Reduction in the appearance of scarring; Increasing natural immunity to attacks of mud fever; Reducing incidence of fibrosis after bouts of cellulitis; Supporting the lymphatic system in cases of spavins, windgalls, etc; Reduction of recovery times after strenuous exertion; Treatment of lymphoedema and elephantiasis in equines.

MLD can be used in conjunction with Deep Oscillation therapy to assist with the breakdown of protein fibrosis and stimulate healing. This German-designed equipment is portable and can be used safely on horses. Deep Oscillation creates a electrostatic field that increases anti-inflammatory and oedema-reducing effects. MLD and Deep Oscillation can be used immediately after injury and on the first postoperative day, as it is very gentle.

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