

**Lilydale Clinic**

484 Maroondah Highway
Lilydale VIC 3140
P (03) 9739 5244 F (03) 9735 5509

Yarra Glen Clinic

28 Bell Street Yarra Glen VIC 3775
P (03) 9730 1569

www.yarrarangesvet.com.au
clinic@yarrarangesvet.com.au

“Foot Abscess – what to do”

Another common winter problem that most horse owners will come across during their time is a foot abscess. These are most common during the wet and muddy winter months, also they can also occur in other months, especially when we have rain following a long and dry spell. Foot abscesses can occur in horses and ponies and with and without shoes on. Your horse is more at risk if they are standing in a wet muddy paddock.

Signs of a foot abscess are usually fairly obvious, although if unsure you are advised to seek veterinary advice, as the degree of swelling and lameness in some cases can be confused with a more serious problem like an infection in the leg or joints, or in worst cases a broken leg.

Abscess occur when water and mud enter through cracks in the hoof wall, and then track up the white line, which is the junction between sensitive and non sensitive tissues in the hoof. This then 'brews' and forms a pocket of fluid and infection which will cause the horse to be very lame until the abscess is drained.

Generally, you will see a progressive worsening lameness, until the horse can barely walk on the foot, sometimes with heat in the hoof, an increase in the strength of the pulse supply to the foot (digital pulse) and swelling in the lower limb. The horse may lay down more than normal, however they should remain bright and alert and have a good appetite.

If you suspect your horse has a foot abscess it will need to be drained by your vet or farrier in order to relieve the pain. If the abscess cannot be drained then a poultice can be applied to the foot to encourage drainage. The horse should be kept in a clean and dry environment. The abscess may track up the foot and break out at the coronary band, this will also give the horse relief.

It is important to consult your vet for advice if your horse develops a foot abscess as depending on the severity they may need antibiotics and will almost certainly require pain relief. Most importantly please ensure that your horses tetanus vaccination are up to date for this condition.

Please call us at the clinic for more information
9739 5244