



# FACTSHEET

## **ADVICE FOR HORSES UNDERGOING LAMENESS INVESTIGATION**

Lameness investigations can be simple and the cause of lameness readily identified. However, some cases are complicated and require a more extensive examination. This may involve your horse staying for the whole day or sometimes overnight.

A lameness investigation involves a number of considerations:-

- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> **Your horses history** – the more information you can give us about the lameness, the more likely we are to diagnose a cause of lameness. Often as lameness has multiple, undefined causes and may develop over a long period of time, it may help you to write down a diary of the lameness symptoms.
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> **Trotting and lunging the horse** – Trotting your horse in a straight line and lunging them as well as flexion tests are done to assess their movement. This is best done on a firm non slip surface; our trot up area is designed for this purpose.
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> **Riding your horse** – You may be requested to ride your horse as some lameness' are exacerbated by ridden work. If this is the case then we will request that you bring your tack to the appointment.
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> **'Nerve blocks'** – local anaesthetic is used when we perform a 'nerve block'. Injecting local anaesthetic around a nerve relieves any pain present in that area, helping us to localise an area for further examination. 'Nerve blocks' are usually done sequentially beginning at the lowest portion of the limb (the foot) and working upwards. Anaesthetic is injected under the skin on one or both sides of the limb, after waiting 5-20 minutes the horse is then trotted up again to see if the block has reduced or abolished the lameness.
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> **'Joint blocks'** – In some cases the lameness may require a joint block, this is more complicated than a nerve block and involves local anaesthetic being injected in a sterile manner into the joint itself.
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> **Radiographs (X rays)** – After an area has been identified as 'painful' we will take a series of radiographs of that area to help us to identify any abnormalities. It may be necessary to remove your horses shoe to obtain the best images possible.
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> **Ultrasound** – This is necessary for any soft tissue problems, it helps us to image your horses tendons, ligaments and larger joints such as the stifle. Your horse will need to be thoroughly clipped for an ultrasound examination.
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> **Referral** – This may be necessary for more detailed imaging such as MRI or bone scan.
- <sup>35</sup>/<sub>17</sub> **Farrier involvement** – The help of your farrier is often needed when discussing a treatment plan. Having you, your farrier and us all together at one time is more beneficial than trying to pass information back and forth secondhand.

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