

Eye problems in horses



We are seeing an exceptionally large increase in the number of horses with eye problems. These problems are including eye ulcers, uveitis, trauma to the eye and conjunctivitis.

Causes

Some of these problems are related to flies, causing infection.

The bright sunlight that we are currently getting is causing the sensitive areas of the eye to become inflamed and painful in some horses

In many areas there is now little grass on some fields due to the lack of rain and therefore some horses are rooting in hedges, where they wouldn't normally be and scratching their corneas

What to look for:

Discharge from eyes (can be watery or cheese like)

Red eyes or conjunctiva

Closed or partially closed eyes

Excessive blinking with the affected eye

Sensitive to bright light

Swollen eye lids



Photo of a horse with uveitis ? Note the pupil which is shut due to the inflammation in the eye



Photo of a horse with an eye ulcer. The green area is where the ulcer has been stained by a vet

How to help your horse

Turning your horse out in a full fly mask with UV protection is the best way to avoid eye problems.

Where possible, avoid turning your horse out in the bright sunlight, unless it has a mask on.

Avoid riding at the brightest, hottest part of the day

Observe your horse's eyes daily

**** IT IS VITAL THAT IF YOU NOTICE ANY OF THE ABOVE SIGNS, THAT YOU CALL A VET WITHIN 24-48 HOURS. EYE PROBLEMS CAN DETERIORATE RAPIDLY AND CAN LEAD TO YOUR HORSE REQUIRING AN EYE TO BE REMOVED IN EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES. HOWEVER, MOST EYES ARE SUCCESSFULLY TREATED IF PROMPT VETERINARY ATTENTION IS SOUGHT. ****