



# STABLE TALK

Equine  
AND  
Farm

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**JULY ISSUE**



## Pakuranga Hunt Races at Ellerslie 22<sup>nd</sup> August

The Pakuranga Hunt Race meeting is coming up so mark your diaries with that important Saturday **21<sup>st</sup> August** date. It features the ever popular “**Veterinary Associates Pony Sprint**” up the Ellerslie straight, with entrants invited from all the local Pony Clubs and Northern Area Hunts, as well as the “**Mad Butcher Pakuranga Hunt Cup**”, which is of course is one of the major steeplechase events at Ellerslie. There is also the “**Revlon Fields of Fashion**” which proved to be extremely popular and loads of fun when held for the first time last year. This event comes with fabulous prizes and the winner gains automatic entry to the regional final of the “**Mercedes Prix de Fashion**” in March.

Come along and be part of what will be a wonderful early spring day at Ellerslie, supporting the kids while enjoying great jumping action, and ladies dress up and be part of the “**Winter Fields of Fashion**”. Tickets will be available from our reception and will be included in next month’s mailing.



## HAY!

For proper digestive tract function, horses require a minimum of one percent of their body weight per day in long-stem dry matter or fibre - meaning that the average adult horse needs five kilograms of hay or grass per day. As the availability of grass reduces in winter (or in a dry summer!) hay becomes an important feed source.

Hay should be of good quality; some criteria for the selection of good hay are:

- hay must be green, or made from good green grass
- there should be no dust or mould
- there should be fine stems and lots of leaves
- there should be no weeds

Hay made from good quality grass can provide more than half the nutrients required by a horse in little or no work. When grass is in very short supply a fat, idle horse can survive on hay alone; however, most horses need some other feed source as it is difficult for a them to physically eat enough hay in a the course of a day to get sufficient nutrition.

Even the best hay will deteriorate if allowed to get wet or if stored for long periods on concrete, allowing it to absorb moisture which causes mouldiness. Mould reduces hay quality, palatability and dry matter digestibility. The mould spores can also create respiratory problems or aggravate an existing problem as the horse inhales the fungal spores into its lungs. Very mouldy hay can cause blood clotting disorders and abortion in pregnant mares.



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## MANAGING WOUNDS!

Appropriate initial management of a wound can significantly improve wound healing. **Haemorrhage** (bleeding) should be controlled by applying pressure directly to the wound or if possible bandaging the wound, and keeping the horse calm until the veterinarian arrives. The veterinarian may elect to sedate the horse to slow down the bleeding, and to allow a thorough examination of the wound.

Wound **contamination** should be reduced by standing the horse somewhere clean (out of mud or dirty bedding). The wound may be hosed to remove gross contamination such as dirt or gravel but prolonged hosing should be avoided as it will cause the tissues to swell. The skin surrounding the wound may be cleaned with iodine or anti-septic, but these disinfectants should not be used in open wounds. **Do not** apply wound sprays or powders before the veterinarian arrives. The vet may decide to suture the wound, in which case these treatments would be contraindicated.

The veterinarian can reduce healing time by surgically **debriding** a contaminated or dirty wound. Foreign material (dirt, hair) and damaged tissue are removed and the wound is **lavaged** to wash away remaining debris and bacteria. The veterinarian will also decide whether the wound should be **sutured** or not. Fresh wounds are generally sutured more successfully than older wounds, but the degree of tissue damage and contamination are important determinants of successful closure. Contaminated or dirty wounds should never be sutured closed!

Any full-thickness skin wound will benefit from a protective **bandage** for the following reasons:

- it protects the wound from further contamination
- it controls bleeding and reduces swelling by maintaining pressure over the wound
- it retains medicated dressings and absorbs discharge, providing wound drainage
- it provides support and immobilises the wound

A properly applied bandage has three separate layers:

1. The **primary (contact) layer** should be sterile, non-irritating and allow wound drainage. Sutured wounds should be dressed with a dry dressing and do not need any antibiotic ointment. Open wounds should be covered with a non-adherent dressing like paraffin gauze (Paranet) or Melonin.
2. The **secondary (intermediate) layer** absorbs any discharge, prevents pressure sores and helps to immobilise the limb. A thick layer of gamgee or cotton wool is most commonly used.
3. The **third (tertiary) layer** puts pressure on the wound and immobilises the limb. Commonly used materials are vetrap/equiwrap, elastoplast and crepe bandages secured with adhesive tape.

However, improperly applied bandages can do more harm than good! Improperly applied bandages can create pressure sores and damage underlying tendons. A sudden increase in lameness, swelling above or below the bandage and coldness of the bottom of the leg are indicative of a problem under the bandage: remove the bandage immediately and check the leg!

A bed of healthy granulation tissue is essential for normal wound healing, but sometimes excessive granulation tissue (proud flesh) forms. Topical corticosteroid creams (such as imflamol or bioderm) are useful for controlling proud flesh. Sometimes it may also be necessary to get your veterinarian to trim the proud flesh, as new skin cells will only move across a flat wound surface (proud flesh contains no nerve fibers so this is a simple non-painful procedure, but it does bleed a lot!)

As a general rule, the longer a wound is kept bandaged the faster it will heal and the better the eventual cosmetic outcome.

## SOME HELPFUL HINTS.....

Don't rub the wound; you'll injure the new tissue.

Don't put cotton wool/gamgee directly onto a wound.

Don't pull the tertiary layer too tight; you must be able to get 2 fingers underneath easily.

Don't apply crepe bandages wet; they will shrink and tighten as they dry.

Don't cut directly over the wound when removing a bandage.

Do apply vaseline below an open draining wound to prevent scalding.

