



# Home Farm Equine Clinic

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## JANUARY



We hope you all had a fabulous Christmas and best wishes to you and all your horses for 2009.

We regularly get queries from people regarding vaccinations. Whilst we are more than happy to answer your questions hopefully this information can make it a bit clearer for you!

Firstly we cannot stress enough how important it is to vaccinate your horse. It is an effective way of protecting your horse from preventable diseases and also assists in prevention of spread should an outbreak occur. The most common diseases vaccinated against are influenza and tetanus although other diseases can also be vaccinated against. There was also a vaccine against strangles up until recently but this has been withdrawn from the market and is no longer available.

The principle of vaccination is to administer a primary course to boost immunity and then follow this with booster vaccinations to maintain immunity. The intervals for vaccinating depend on the nature of the vaccine, the immune response and competition rules. Horses should be vaccinated during a quiet or rest period and should not undertake strenuous exercise within 24 hours of being vaccinated.

### **EQUINE INFLUENZA**

This is a highly infectious respiratory disease characterised by a fever and a dry cough and sometimes nasal discharge. The recommended initial course comprises 3 injections at the following intervals:

- 1<sup>st</sup> vaccination
- 2<sup>nd</sup> vaccination 4-6 weeks after the 1<sup>st</sup>
- 3<sup>rd</sup> vaccination 6 months after the 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Annual booster injections
- Foals can start their vaccinations from about 5-6 months of age

The above timetable is what is recommended by the vaccine manufacturers as giving the best efficacy. However, the usual competition rules regarding vaccinations are that the first 2 injections should be between 21 and 92 days apart and the 3<sup>rd</sup> one should be 150-215 days after the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Thereafter no more than 365 day intervals should separate booster vaccinations. Horses are not usually allowed to compete for 7 days following a vaccination. Although we do our best to assist you, the responsibility for ensuring your horse's vaccination history complies with the current regulations is entirely that of the owner. Even a day overdue is too late!

***BE AWARE THAT THE REQUIREMENTS FOR HORSES COMPETING UNDER FEI RULES ARE DIFFERENT.***

Your vaccinations should be entered on your horse's passport and dated and signed by a vet. This is the only proof you have that your horse has been vaccinated correctly and is a very important record.

### **TETANUS**

This is a frequently fatal infectious disease caused by toxins from *Clostridium tetani* bacterium that lives in the soil. Symptoms include progressive muscle stiffness and a hypersensitivity to noise and touch which provokes painful muscular spasms. Third eyelid prolapse is often also noted.

The initial vaccination course comprises of 2 injections 4-6 weeks apart. This is followed by a 3<sup>rd</sup> injection within a year of the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Thereafter a booster is required every 2 years. This is commonly administered in alternate years with the annual influenza vaccine. Foals can start their vaccinations at 5-6 months of age and the mare can be given a booster 4-6 weeks prior to foaling to provide a degree of protection to the foal from birth.

Although seldom seen nowadays, this is due to the fact that most owners keep their horses vaccinated. If your horse is not vaccinated or you are unsure of its vaccination status and your horse sustains a wound then a tetanus antitoxin injection should be given as soon as possible. This will provide immediate but temporary protection.

Occasionally reactions can occur to all vaccinations. These can take the form of a local reaction (bruising, muscle hardness and abscess formation at the needle site) or systemic reactions (depression, fever). Most reactions are short lived and transient but contact us as soon as possible if you think your horse is suffering from an adverse reaction and we can help you.