**Mud Fever**

If you have a horse with white pasterns, you have most likely had “mud fever” at some time. There are a number of treatments available, based around zinc creams, antibacterials, iodine washes and oils, as well as a few old recipes! It seems particularly bad as the moment, but it is common in this district all year round.

What is the cause?

In wet and muddy conditions the continual wetting and drying of the skin causes the skin to crack and allow bacteria to penetrate. Serum oozes from the lesions sticking to the hair forming the typical scabs.

But some horses get it in dry weather!

Yes, photosensitivity, where the skin reacts to sunlight, and becomes inflamed, also allows bacteria to penetrate and the same reaction takes place. Other causes are abrasions to the skin and even biting flies.

Why do some treatments work sometimes and not other times?

As each case is a bit different, with combinations of water, mud, sunlight, abrasions, different strains of bacteria, and the horses own immune system, one treatment is not going to work in every case.

Should I cover the mud fever with a bandage?

Covering does protect the area from sunlight and allows the topical medication to stay in contact at higher levels. So yes, covering does generally help, as long as the bandages are dry.

Sometimes the whole leg swells and the horse is sore!

These severe cases are caused by bacteria penetrating deeper tissues and may require systemic antibiotics and anti inflammatories so talk to us.

Can I prevent “mud fever”?

Try keeping the legs dry. Brush rather than hose mud off. Keep protected from sunlight with zinc creams. Start treatment early.

What should I treat with first?

Start with the medication that worked last time and if that is not helping talk to us. There are a number of products available plus some medications we make up.