



Horse Breather

Equine Breathing ezine November 07 issue 27



Chronic Breathing Difficulties – 1N trial

Pauline and Lin started a 1N trial in July with Sam their 10 year old Connemara x TB. Sam had been poorly since contracting acorn and ragwort poisoning at age 5 years. He pulled through with use of the vet and holistic medication and management but in December 2005 he contracted a respiratory virus and was diagnosed with allergic airway disease. Sam was put on ventipulmin and steroids by nebuliser.

Pauline kept a detailed diary of symptoms and treatment for over 2 years. Despite the treatment and careful management Sam continued to have breathing difficulties (double respiratory movement and heaves) that were at times distressing and even life threatening. Pauline described it thus; "...he was unable to breathe in enough oxygen, his head nearly on the floor, sweating and the heaving flanks causing him to stand swaying on his feet."

Sam had improved during 2007 but continued to have breathing difficulties and a weak immune system which compromised his ability to work. Pauline hoped that Equine Breathing would help Sam recover. Sam was seen by a new vet before the 1N trial. His prognosis was that he was not sure what to expect except that the breathing difficulties would be an ongoing condition and that each day should be taken literally as it comes and whatever symptoms show should be treated as they arise.

Before starting the trial Pauline devised a set of symptom scores from 5 (worst case) to 1 (mildest) based on his respiration rate (number of breaths per minute), his demeanour (eg agitated, relaxed etc), type of breathing (heaves, double respiratory movement, nostril description etc) and his general appearance. This enabled her to assess Sam's progress each day.

At first, not sure what to expect, Pauline started with 10 minutes of 1N each day and then 20 minutes. By the end of the first week, after some initial resistance, Sam was totally relaxed and sleepy and resting his head on Pauline's shoulder.

By the end of the second week they were doing the full 30 minute sessions. Pauline was very surprised when Sam's symptoms disappeared completely and his respiratory rate was normal at 10 breaths per minute (normal range is 8 – 16 bpm) for the first time in over two years.

Over the next 6 weeks of the trial the symptoms returned but at a low level and the respiratory rate was in the mid to high teens rather than the high twenties recorded prior to the trial.

In her evaluation of 2 months of 1N Pauline said "Sam's ridden breathing respiration has gone down by half - now between 10 and 18 breaths per minute as against 26 – 34 before starting the trial."

She reported, "Physically he looks much happier and his body tone is good with a gloss to his coat. He has developed a different muscle outline since 1N commenced. He now works well under saddle and in sand school.

"Lin and I are extremely happy with the results to date. We couldn't believe how well Sam has continued to improve. Completing endurance set speed ride in June and no ill effects and then training days attended are things we would not have even contemplated this time last year. Great isn't it !

Mates at the yard can't believe how well he has improved both physically and mentally over the past 2 months. We are now accompanying others out on forest rides and hacking regularly, which we would not have done before due to Sam's breathing difficulties.

Its difficult to believe what you can see is happening and how quickly progress was made even though Sam has had a few set backs due to outside interventions ie annual jabs, picked up a virus from field mates. He is still continuing to improve and this winter will tell us more."

Pauline and Lin decided to continue doing 1N three times a week and there will be an update on Sam's progress after 6 months of Equine Breathing.

If you have any queries or feedback I'll be pleased to hear from you at clare@equinebreathing.com

breathe easy, Clare

The information in this newsletter is for educational purposes only. Equine Breathing is not a substitute for veterinary care.