

## Horse Breather

Equine Breathing ezine March 2010 issue 49



## **Equine Polysaccharide Storage Myopathy or EPSM**

Three years ago muscle biopsy and blood enzyme tests showed that Doobie, Jackie's draft horse had Equine Polysaccharide Storage Myopathy or EPSM. Her vet's prognosis was that the painful disease would progress, with increasing muscle wasting until a sudden deterioration very quickly to death.

However Doobie immediately responded well to Equine Breathing and Jackie was excited to find that after two months Doobie was back to being a normal horse.

EPSM is a newly recognised disease which appears to be particularly common and severe in draft breeds according to Dr Beth Valentine of Cornell University. It has been identified as a cause of severe muscle wasting, tying up, poor performance, abnormal hind limb gaits and colic. She says that more than one in every 2 draft horses is affected.

Jackie said she had watched Doobie deteriorate over 5 years of owning him to the point where the EPSM symptoms were very advanced and it was extremely distressing for him. He was difficult and sometimes dangerous to handle.

The change to a high fat, low carbohydrate feed prescribed by the vet (and recommended for EPSM) made Doobie's symptoms much worse, and none of the other treatments helped.

When Jackie started Equine Breathing, Doobie had the following symptoms;

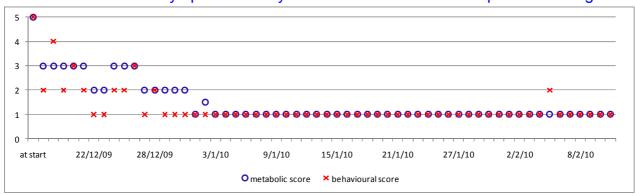
- Tendency to colic requiring vet treatment
- Severe muscle tension in hamstrings, shoulders and neck (like concrete, with high ridges and deep troughs)
- · Head carriage high in all gaits
- Not tracking up by 12 inches
- Gait looks like he has 2 straight wooden legs in walk
- · Cannot circle on 22ft line
- If ridden, muscles cramp about 10 minutes into work
- Hind legs very cold with poor circulation
- Skin hypersensitive to flies and sun
- Droppings liquid
- Extreme spookiness and or freezing rigid to the tiniest stimulus (eg a bird fart as Jackie puts it!)
- Bolting
- Aggression vicious bullying of the other members of the herd

Jackie used an All Weather Breather and recorded Doobie's symptoms daily to provide data for a trial. She defined scores for the symptoms on a scale of 0 to 5, with 5 being the most severe, and did this for the metabolic symptoms as a group and the behavioural symptoms as a group so that they could be tracked separately.



After 3 weeks most of the symptoms had either disappeared or reduced to a negligible level, as summarised in the chart.

## Doobie's EPSM symptom severity over the first 2 months of Equine Breathing



Six days after starting Equine Breathing Jackie's vet remarked on how calm he was and that his hamstrings were a lot looser. Jackie could not believe the difference in Doobie, he was so much more mellow and so much better behaved that she allowed him to graze with two new field mates and he caused no trouble.

In week 2 Jackie started to feel warmth in his back legs which had only ever felt cold.

In week 3 Jackie commented that he was so calm that there was now no noise that would cause Doobie to spook or freeze rigid, which was a big improvement after being set off by bird farts!

In week 4, the second week of January (ie mid winter), Jackie was surprised to see that Doobie was growing a winter coat. He had never grown a winter coat in all the five years she had had him.

After 2 months Jackie said "The All Weather Breather has changed my horse's life, the muscle tightness, stiff legged gait, tension, colic and aggression have gone. He is like a normal horse enjoying herd life. I've never really known the true horse inside his diseased body and I am so excited about the future."



The contents of this ezine are not a substitute for veterinary advice. If the reader has any concerns they should seek independent professional advice from a vet.