



## Oakham Veterinary Hospital – Lameness Investigations

Oakham Veterinary Hospital is a leading centre for lameness assessment, seeing many of both our own patients and referral cases. It is an area of special expertise and interest for several of our senior clinicians. The hospital assesses horses from a wide range of disciplines, from the hairiest of ponies to top event horses that are competing around the globe.

We have two large trot up areas where the vets can assess horses moving at walk and trot, both in hand and on the lunge. We also have a 20x40 arena that is available to assess horses both under saddle and on the lunge, as some subtle lameness' can appear different on a soft surface. Horses may be ridden both by their owners and occasionally, by one of our team (with the owner's permission).

The usual starting place for diagnosing lameness would be nerve blocks. This involves injecting a local analgesic around a nerve, or directly into a joint or synovial structure, which temporarily removes the sensitivity in that area. Once the block has time to take effect, the horse is then re-assessed to see if the lameness has improved. Once the area causing the lameness has been identified, diagnostic imaging is then used to visualise the problem. The type of imaging used will depend on the nature of the lameness but may include radiography, ultrasonography, MRI or scintigraphy.

Poor performance analysis can be a complex issue, and requires several areas of expertise. There are many possible causes which is why work ups can often take several days. Causes of poor performance can range from medicinal, (anaemia, gastric ulcers), to reproductive, (particularly in mares), and can also include rider/training issues.

Once the cause of lameness/poor performance has been established, we will be able to guide you on the appropriate treatment and management options. These can include anything from treatments such as IRAP, stem cells, PRP, shockwave therapy or surgery to farriery and exercise programmes.

### Here are a few points to note before your visit –

- ☑ We ask that you arrive approximately 15 minutes before your appointment time to fill in the necessary paperwork. You should also remember to bring your passport with you.
- ☑ If you think it might be possible that your horse might have to stay overnight or need to be ridden under saddle for the lameness to present itself please remember to bring rugs or tack with you
- ☑ Painkillers such as bute or danilon should not be given for 4 days prior to the work up.
- ☑ Where possible no farriery should be performed on your horse's feet in the week prior to the visit and the shoes should not be removed.
- ☑ Please try to ensure that your horse is actually lame on the day of your visit. If it is only a mild lameness do not stop working the horse before the visit as it is difficult to diagnose a problem in a sound horse!!
- ☑ Owners are obviously welcome and encouraged to stay during the work up, however lameness investigations can often be lengthy procedures. If this is not convenient you are very welcome to leave the horse in one of our stables and collect the horse at the end of the day.