



SHIRE HORSE SOCIETY AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED

Forging the future of the Shire Horse in Australia

MARCH 2005
OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER



Ineke Kuiper with her Shire gelding *Cedars Edward* (Laddie)

PATRON:

Mr Rob Vickery President Royal Agricultural Society of New South Wales

PRESIDENTS REPORT

Welcome to our second newsletter. Much has happened since our first newsletter sent to you on 11 November 2004.

Firstly, Shire Horse Society Australia Incorporated were able to have the SHS in England look more closely into the stallion inspection issue for all stallions born outside of the UK but more importantly for us, in Australia. In fact we started this very Society over this contentious issue.

It was almost forced upon us by England, that all Australian colt and stallion inspections would be carried out by Australian judges who clearly had financial interests in stallions and semen themselves. This idea was questioned and strongly opposed and fortunately for all Australian breeders, nipped in the bud.

The situation now is that England is throwing around all of the ideas presented to them at an Editing Committee meeting which we attended, to find a fair and equitable way of inspecting stallions in Australia taking into account the huge distances, limited numbers of horses, conflicts of interests and costs involved.

It is our intention to give all Australian breeders the same opportunity of having their stallions and colts inspected by the English Panel Judges at no more cost than the ninety pounds (\$225.00 Aus) that it costs our fellow UK members. We will keep you all up to date on this very important issue.

Our next piece of good news is that Rob Vickery has agreed to become Patron of our Society. Rob is the President of the Royal Agricultural Society of New South Wales and has had a lifetime of experience with horses. It was Rob Vickery who helped us to get Shire Horse Classes put on at the Sydney Royal Easter Show back in 1991. We are so happy and honoured to have Rob as our Patron.

Mr Terry Gardner our English judge for the Sydney Royal Easter Show has been invited to attend our inaugural meeting along with Mr. Rob Vickery. The meeting will be held on show day Wednesday 23rd March. Members will be advised of the time and meeting place in their Notices.

All members are welcome and encouraged to attend. Light refreshments will be served.

Shire Horse Society Australia is now an official supporter of the Royal Easter Show and has donated a fabulous prize for the Best Shire Exhibit.

Best Shod Shire class will not be held this year due to the safety issues of holding it in areas not cordoned off to the general public. Shire Horse Society Aust. Inc. has contacted the RAS and requested that this event be put on in the Schmidt Arena in future years and has offered to sponsor the prizes for this event. We have suggested that this event be held straight after the Shire Ridden Class has finished in the main arena.

Thank you to all of our new members. Our committee is committed to keeping you informed and having fun with our wonderful horses and sharing news and stories with each other in our best efforts to ***"Forging the future of the Shire Horse in Australia"***.

Helene Scarf



SHOWS WHERE YOU CAN SEE SHIRES IN ACTION.

March

Sydney Royal Easter Show

The Shires will be shown on the 23rd in the Main Arena. The judge will be Mr Terry Gardner from England

April

Royal Bathurst Show

8 – 10th April

Entries are still open for this event. You can contact the Bathurst Show Office on 02 6331 3175 for entry forms. **THERE ARE DEDICATED SHIRE HORSE CLASSES AT THIS SHOW FOR THE FIRST TIME.** The judge for this event will be Mr Jack Dean

April/May

Gatton Heavy Horse Field Days

30th April & 1st May

The Shires will be shown on Saturday morning. The judge will be Mrs Nolene Franklin



SHOW RESULTS

Kiama

SHIRE

Stallion/colt No entries

Mare /filly 1st -Southern Cross Athena, R & N Ferguson

2nd -Ingleside Kaitlyn, K McKay & G Hosa

Gelding 1st -Mandalay Magnetine Realm, K McKay & G Hosa

Champion - Southern Cross Athena, R & N Ferguson

Reserve Champion - Ingleside Kaitlyn, K McKay & G Hosa

Berry

SHIRE

Stallion/colt No entries

Mare /filly 1st - Ingleside Kaitlyn, K McKay & G Hosa

2nd - Southern Cross Athena, R & N Ferguson

Gelding 1st - Mandalay Magnetine Realm, K McKay & G Hosa

Champion - Ingleside Kaitlyn, K McKay & G Hosa

Reserve Champion - Southern Cross Athena, R & N Ferguson

Nowra

SHIRE

Stallion/colt 1st - Champagne Charlie - K. McKay & G Hosa
Mare /filly 1st - Ingleside Kaitlyn -K.mckay & G.Hosa
Gelding 1st - Mandalay Magnetine Realm, K McKay & G Hosa

Champion - Ingleside Kaitlyn -K.mckay & G.Hosa

Reserve Champion - Mandalay Magnetine Realm, K McKay & G Hosa

Heavy horse in harness - Ingleside Matilda, K. McKay & G Hosa

Kangaroo Valley

Heavy horse classes

Stallion/colt-nil

Mare /filly 1st - Luscombe Joy- H & G Scarf
2nd - Mcmurchie Virginia -K.McKay & G Hosa
3rd - Ingleside Kaitlyn-K.McKay & G Hosa
Gelding 1st - Cedars Archie -H & G Scarf
2nd - Mandalay Magnetine Realm, K McKay & G Hosa

Ground driven obstacle 1st - Cedars Archie -H & G Scarf
2nd - Mcmurchie Virginia -K.McKay & G Hosa

Champion - Cedars Archie -H & G Scarf

Reserve Champion - Mcmurchie Virginia – K McKay & G Hosa



'Free Service Directory'

This is a free classified section for members wishing to advertise horse associated items.

- **Equine Supplies** (02) 9688 3220
- **Farrier** Errin Lewis - 0423194752
- **Weddings** - Ware's Livery Stables 02 9679 1255
- **Cedars Cottages**- Secluded self contained cottages for your weekend away with the Shire Horses. Contact Helene Scarf 0412 400 886.
- **Retford Equine Veterinary Bowral Clinic:** Vet Karim Kooros experienced with heavy horses. Ph: 02 48611166 Fax: 02 48621740 email kooros@optusnet.com.au

Tasmanian Show Scene

Deloraine is a picturesque country town located about ¾ hour to the NW of Launceston. Their Agricultural Show is held the second last Saturday in November each year. It is the best supported Heavy Horse Show in the north of Tasmania, and I would venture to say that it is the biggest in the State. In 2004 there were 20 heavy horses entered in classes at Deloraine. (For comparison, the Royal Hobart Show had 3 in 2004, mind you there are several Southern shows that do have much greater attendance than Hobart, but I'm unaware of any that rival Deloraine.) Support is such that some Southerners bring their horses up to Deloraine to compete.

It is a very friendly show where exhibitors help each other out beforehand and afterwards, but competition is earnest. The Deloraine A & P Society go to the trouble of getting a judge across from Victoria each year as well, and they are the only show society in Tassie that I am aware of that does this. The judge is someone recommended by the CCHS Victorian Branch. In 2005 it is hoped that there will be a training day run on the Sunday after the show where the judge will officiate as the educator.

Clydies are very much the favourite over here. However, registered animals are in the minority. Indeed there are possibly only two or so active Clydesdale Studs in the State that breed registered stock. Deloraine classes include led classes for colts, stallions, mares and fillies of all age categories. There is also a led pairs class, driven pairs, several different harness classes, and a driven in long reigns class. The final event of the day is an obstacle course pulling a sled with a single horse. It is very popular with the spectators.

At the 2004 show there were only two entire males, my yearling Shire colt, Ingelside Dancer, and a 4 yo Clydesdale stallion, Graceville Lodge Leopold. Leopold was awarded Champion Male and Dancer the Reserve. A Clydesdale female took out Supreme Champion.



Settling well into Tasmania and enjoying his newly found showing career is, Debbie Buckland's colt, **Ingelside Dancer** (Dan she calls him) competing at the Deloraine Show.

Having been involved with horses for many years and recently discovering how wonderful and versatile the Shire Horse is, Jane Greenman has agreed to do a series of articles of her experience with **Luscombe Nodram**. We will be able to follow Noddy as he learns what life as a working horse is all about. Not only is Noddy one of a handful of Shires in Victoria, he is Australia's only grey Shire gelding. Noddy's education is going to be a feature of this magazine until he graduates the sometimes difficult role of working horse.

Noddy Goes to School



Noddy as a yearling being long-reined by Jane

Since my last article, Noddy has grown to be a yearling, and like all 'puppies' he is full of the joys of youth. After a bit of a growth spurt, it soon became apparent he needed to learn some ground manners and discipline before he realised he was now bigger and stronger than me.

When he was 12 months old I started to take him to Shows to get him used to noise and children. Since then we have visited many more and he is now used to helicopters landing next to him, a 15 piece Bagpipe Band, the 360 Ute Burn Out competition, Tractor Pulls and little humans sticking fingers in his nose. He still has many more years ahead to learn but now Noddy loves Shows.

As a yearling and standing over 18 hands, he also needed to learn respect. It was time for Noddy to start School. He began by learning 'space.' I have my space and he isn't allowed in it. But I'm allowed anywhere in his space. He has learnt to just stand while his feet are done, or his sheath is cleaned, any part is touched at any time without question. Although his ground manners are coming along fine I still have trouble getting worming paste down, after the first tube he resists, but we are working on that one.

At 18 months he was broken to harness, not to pull any heavy weight but to learn the feel and discipline as second nature. He enjoys his work and waits at the gate every morning wanting the attention that comes with training. We take a different route each day so he doesn't get bored. Like a child at School, work and play should all be fun and reward.

It doesn't take long to teach them at this age and they remember it forever. Noddy was taught early because of his size but it has made him a better horse. He is more fun to be around and I can take him out without too much headache.

I should add that harness is very new to me as I come from a riding background, but I can tell you it is a lot easier to learn (who said you can't teach an old dog new tricks). So for anyone out there who either doesn't know where to start, or thinks it is too hard, think again – if I can do it, anyone can and your horse will love you for it.



(Jane's next article will be about Noddy being ridden under saddle in readiness for the Sydney Royal).



Preparing for Weaning

By John Kohnke

There comes a time in every young horse's life when it has to become independent on its own accord, or is taken from its mother at weaning. Over the next three months, most of last year's crop of foals will be weaned to start an independent life and fend for themselves. The developmental phase between weaning and yearling age is one of the most crucial periods in a young

horse's formative first year. Any set back at weaning will be caught up by 8-9 months of age, provided adequate nutrition is available and routine health management such as worming, vaccination and foot care is carried out.

Growth Standards

During the first month of life, a foal relies on its mother for nutrition supplied by milk alone, as well as, protection and basic survival, and 'equine' education. Observations indicate that

during the first week after birth, a foal stays within one metre of its mother for 85% of the time, rarely moving more than five metres away by 14 days of age. A young foal mimics its mother's grazing habits and selection of pasture plants from 2-3 weeks of age. During the first month, a thoroughbred foal gains body weight at a rate around 1.5kg per day, doubling its birth weight to around 85-95kg in the first month. It takes another three months to double its body weight again, reaching 200kg by four months of age, reducing to an average daily gain of around 900-1000kg per day at weaning age.

Nutritional Adaptions

Once past the peak of lactation, which occurs from 4 to 10 weeks after foaling, the foal relies less on milk as its primary nutritional source, and begins to eat increasing amounts of hard food and hay if provided, and develops a selective grazing pattern to meet its needs from pasture.

Foals become more independent after the first month of age, and after the peak of lactation, spend less time nursing and sleeping, with more time occupied by grazing and socialising - hopefully without injury. In fact, by the time the traditional weaning age is reached at 5-6 months of age, the majority of foals have virtually weaned themselves, drinking less than three litres of milk per day.

In the cooler Northern hemisphere countries, only 10% of young foals start to drink water by one month of age, whilst 50% of foals have not been observed to drink water until after they are weaned. Under warmer Australian conditions, Dr. Robyn Martin in Queensland observed that foals drank an average of five litres of water daily by 10 weeks of age. A foal by this age only maintains close proximity to its mother during periods of 'frightening' activities, such as being yarded for worming or foot care, or when brought into the teasing yards to check the mare's pregnancy status.

Separation at weaning superimposes physical and emotional stress onto a young horse's lifestyle, along with nutritional change brought about by an independent feeding and grazing routine. The steady growth rate is often interrupted by weaning, even in a healthy, reasonably well adjusted foal. Foals that have succumbed to sickness or sustained an injury during the first 10 weeks after weaning, are affected to a greater degree.

Diet Changes

A number of surveys of weekly body weight records of foals after weaning indicate that a significant set back in gain occurs during the first 7-10 days after weaning. This can vary between foals even of the same age as they adapt to independence and cope with 'fretting' after weaning. Studies have shown that this depression in growth rate can be minimised by providing a well formulated palatable ration so that a foal becomes accustomed to the taste and develops eating habits as it co-feeds with its mother in the 4-6 weeks prior to weaning. If the foal is already eating a weaner feed mix, then at weaning there will be a lower risk of nutritional stress and loss of weight gain caused by a change in feed.

Social Changes

Foals are gregarious animals and by weaning age, many develop "friendships" and companionship with other foals at the same level in the herd hierarchy. Observations indicate that the foal of the dominant mare in the 'peck order' in a group of mares, is likely to be the "leader of the pack" of foals, but in fact, may not adapt to the social changes at weaning as quickly as a foal lower in the 'peck order'. Weanling colts generally suffer less of a set back than fillies, although fillies tend to regain lost growth more quickly than colts in the 3 months following weaning because colts spend more time running around seeking companionship and playing games.

Single or Paired Weaning?

Stud managers vary in the way in which they wean young horses. Some wean by observing and selectively removing the dams of the oldest, best socialised foals once or twice a week, leaving these foals in the herd until the last mare is replaced with a quiet old gelding as a 'nanny' for a couple of months. Other studs simply run a "hot" wire or electric fence down the centre of a paddock after separating mares and their foals. In the USA and UK, and many studs in Australia, it is customary to wean foals into stalls over a 7-10 day period. A study carried out at Virginia Polytech, a leading research and teaching institution in equine nutrition and management, observed that whilst a foal weaned into a box by itself was generally more noisy and vocal in seeking reunion and companionship, foals weaned in matched pairs by age or paddock groups tended to suffer an increased degree of physical rather than emotional stress.

Measurements of cortisol response and immune function found that paired foals had higher cortisol levels and a greater degree of immune suppression than a single foal during the first seven days after weaning.

Viral Diseases

Some foals will be slow to adapt to independent feeding or feeding within a group of weanlings all attempting to establish individual 'peck order' status within the group. This can affect their body weight gain and also increases the risk of weaners contracting equine herpes virus (EHV-1 or EHV-4) respiratory disease.

Horses can become carriers of EHV-1 or EHV-4 after a previous infection, shedding viable viral organisms from the pharyngeal lymph node area as an aerosol, or into feed bins by way of nasal and saliva secretions during feeding.

The effect of increased cortisone levels and suppression of the immune response, combined with congregation of weanlings in paddock groups, significantly increases the risk of contracting EHV-1 or EHV-4 viral respiratory disease.

Initial infection causes an elevated temperature, depression and often loss of appetite and interest in feeding. This is often superimposed onto an already decreased appetite and acceptance of feed, leading to a depressed weight gain and loss of body condition. Weaners develop a 'snotty nose' which helps spread more viable disease organisms in the group environment, so that the whole group in a communal feeding system eventually becomes infected.

The infection can linger in a group for 2-4 weeks with risk of re-infection after 30 days because natural immunity is short lived, even in older horses with a strong, active immune defence system.

Conclusion

Weaning is a stressful period in a young horse's life. However, planned nutritional management to ensure foals become accustomed to a ration and develop reasonably dependent feeding habits before weaning will help limit the degree of body weight loss in the 7-14 day adaptive period after weaning. Weaning foals into a box or yard by themselves, but within sight and sound contact with other weaners, appears to reduce stress and the degree of immune suppression compared to new weaners housed in pairs.

Ensuring adequate shelter, starting vaccination courses, and worming at weaning onto clean pastures will help to minimise the degree of overall stress, worm uptake and viral respiratory disease during the first 7-14 days after weaning.

For the last 20 years, John Kohnke has arguably become the most well known Australian veterinarian as an adviser on the nutrition and practical health care of horses. He provides a nutritional consultancy service to many trainers and studs, as well as owners and riders of equestrian horses.

He has written and edited two major books and numerous book chapters on equine nutrition, which have become well recognised hand books for horse training, breeders, owners and veterinarians throughout the world. He has written over 1500 articles on horse feeding and health care, presented over 1000 seminars and lectured on horse nutrition to students of horse care courses.

He has now formulated an innovative range of feed supplements and horse care products, distinguished by the Kohnke's Own brand name. The Kohnke's Own health care products include worming, hoof and coat care preparations that are formulated to ensure optimum results at an affordable price.

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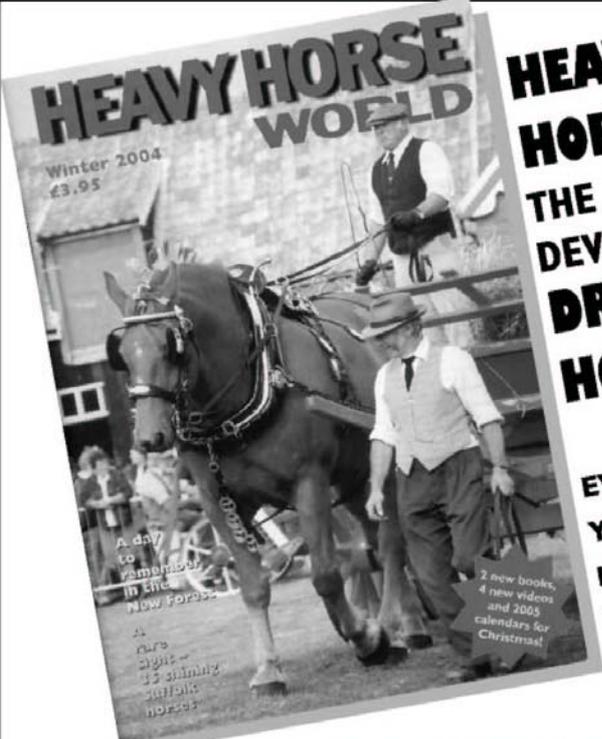
Bonding with her new foal is Carina Gardiner pictured with **Miss Vanity** – Sire Ingleside Might 'n' Power. In the next Shire Horse Society Australia Incorporated newsletter, Carina is going to share with us her introduction to Shire Horses.



Handy Hint

Picking up horse manure at least weekly from yards and small paddocks is 5 – 10 times more effective than worming alone. The hot summer months (Jan-Feb) are the ideal time to reduce worm egg and larvae contamination as pastures are usually short and manure heaps dry out quickly – making it easier to find and pick up. Most worm eggs and larvae survive only 24 – 48 hours under hot summer conditions





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Signature of proposer

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Signature of seconder

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Date

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Annual subscriptions are renewable on January 1st of each year, irrespective of date of joining.
(Except 2004/2005)

Copies of Rules of the Association are available on request from the Society.

Cheques are payable to 'SHIRE HORSE SOCIETY AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED'

Please return this form and cheques to -
Secretary, SHS Australia, 133 Albatross Road, Nowra NSW 2541

Proof of current Shire Horse ownership may be requested.

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