

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2023

AUTUMN/WINTER WATCH - SYCAMORES -ATYPICAL MYOPATHY

Atypical Myopathy is a muscle disorder of rapid onset caused by the ingestion of sycamore seeds, seedlings or leaves. The seeds and seedlings can contain the toxin Hypoglycin A (HGA) which slows or stops energy production in the horse's muscle and heart (some apparently unaffected horses have been found to have high concentrations of HGA in their blood which suggests some horses are more susceptible to the toxin than others this may be due to genetic differences or differing grazing habits). Cases often follow a sudden adverse change in weather conditions such as heavy rain or frost.

Sadly around 75% of cases are fatal.

The disease may present with soreness of the muscles, stiffness, weakness, muscle trembling, depressed appearance, lethargy, difficulty breathing, colic-symptoms and brown or dark red urine.

If clinical signs are such, and Atypical Myopathy is suspected, it is imperative that treatment be started promptly (the disease can be confirmed by blood tests) however supportive therapy should start as soon as possible, rather than wait for confirmation of blood results. Affected horses often need to be admitted to a specialist equine hospital for supportive intensive care - iv fluid therapy and anti-inflammatory medication.

REDUCING THE RISK...

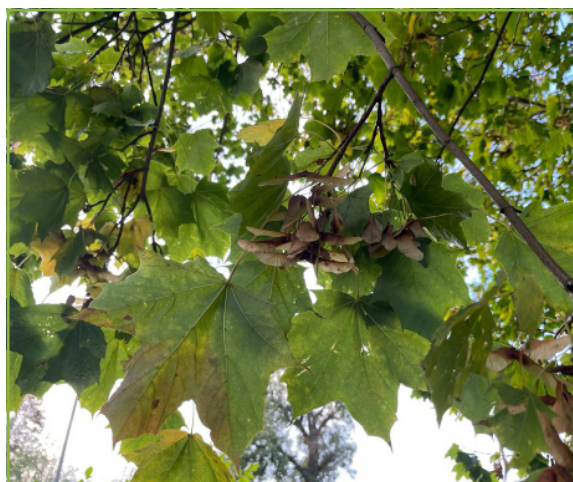
- Avoid letting horses graze paddocks with overhanging Sycamore trees in autumn.
 - Regularly check your pasture and neighbouring areas for Acer/Sycamore plants and seeds
 - some helicopter seeds can travel in the wind up to 200m.
 - Clear up fallen leaves and seeds.
 - Fence off areas if horses have to stay in affected pasture.
 - Reduce the number of horses on the grazing and supplement to ensure enough forage.
- +++ If you have any questions or concerns regarding your horse please call the practice on 01442 851921 +++

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