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**Equestrian
Edition**



Talking Horses

The newsletter with news, views and practical advice

from the editor

It's the countdown to Christmas, the festive holidays and, if the forecasts are correct, a long, hot summer. Feed costs are increasing with most feed suppliers raising prices as grain and meals become scarcer under the impending drought conditions. Hay is already in short supply in many areas on the mainland and suppliers are predicting prices over \$20 per bale! Perhaps it's time to go back to basics and look for alternative feeds and a comprehensive but affordable supplement of concentrated trace-minerals and vitamins.

Our last issue Feature Article on Sacro-iliac Pain certainly hit the spot as we received 100's of enquiries from owners who have finally found a possible cause for their horses' reluctance to corner, dragging the hind limbs and lack of topline.

In this issue, we review the underlying reasons for 'fizzy', 'spooky' and unsettled, 'fidgety' and 'good at home, bad away' behaviour in horses, discussing some new research on horse behaviour and attitude. We provide some simple guidelines on how to manage these behavioural problems. We also include a review of chronic fatigue in horses and some of its underlying causes. We've shoe-horned in some hints on drought management and how to reduce feed waste.

And lastly, if your mare has had, or is expecting a foal, we've outlined some of the early signs of joint pain in young growing foals.

Regards John Kohnke

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Kohnke's Own

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**THIS ISSUE
Feature Article**

➤ **Unsettled and Anxious Behaviour**
– New Research

Also a brief on

- **Chronic Fatigue** – does it affect horses?
- **Joint Pain in Young Foals** – Early signs
- **Drought Management** – Some helpful hints

HANDY HINT **1**

Locking or "clicking" stifles? Occasionally a horse will start to 'lock' when it tries to move forward or 'click' in the stifles as it walks. It's called Upward Fixation of the Patella (the human knee cap) in technical terms and there can be a number of underlying reasons – sprain of the stifle joint when getting up from resting, rapid growth rate in a young horse, possible selenium deficiency in a young horse and 'sickle hocked' conformation. If a horse starts to "lock" or "click", try trimming the front edges of the hind hooves back and squaring them off – it will improve breakover as it walks, reducing backward flexion of the hock and 'locking' of the stifle in 80% of horses with a 'locking' problem.

2

HANDY HINT

Mimimising 'Queensland Itch'. Many horses are highly allergic to midge or sandfly bites as they swarm in the early evening and morning in endemic areas. Try rugging from 4.00pm to 8.00am with a full light rug and tail flap to reduce 'midge' or sandfly worry. Washing the horse in a permethrin wash at 7 day intervals over 4 weeks will also help in most cases. If all else fails, apply a menthol based gel or 'vapour rub' – dissolve a tablespoonful in a cup of warm water – seal it in an old jam jar (label it 'POISON' and 'KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN') and using a sponge, dab a little over the head area, withers and tail butt – the favoured sites for sandfly attack in the early evening. **Midges and sandflies hate biting through menthol! In a few days, the itch will settle down and the horse will have a happier life.**

