



Red Anvil Ltd
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Bone Spavin

Definition

Bone Spavin is the degeneration of the Proximal Inter-Tarsal, Distal Inter-Tarsal Joint & Tarso-Metatarsal joints on the medial side. It is characterised by new bone formation (ossification) at the joint margins.

Anatomy

The Anatomical structures involved with bone spavin are:

- Proximal Tarsal Bone
- Middle Tarsal Bone
- 3rd Metatarsal Bone
- Proximal Inter-Tarsal Joint
- Distal Inter-Tarsal Joint
- Tarso-Metatarsal Joint

Causes

The Causes of Bone Spavin are:

- Poor/irregular Farriery
- Hard Ridden Horses
- Concussion
- Conformation
- Direct Trauma
- Mineral Imbalance

Horses that have a lot of excess stress placed on their hocks can also be predisposed to bone spavin, such as Show Jumpers, Polo / Polocrosse Ponies, & Horses that do a lot of Road work.

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Clinical Signs

Horses may start to perform poorly and be jerky when turning on the affected side. The Hock will have impaired flexion and it will be possible to see the bony changes to the medial dorsal distal aspect of the hock. Affected horse also drag their toes and this can be seen in the shoe wear, having a high ware on the lateral branch and toe regions of the shoes.

Diagnosis

If all the clinical signs are present for Bone spavin it is possible perform a flexion test and if positive then X-Rays should be taken.

A flexion test consists of trotting the horse on the yard to take a benchmark, then flexing the hock for 90 seconds and putting the horse immediately into a trot. If the horse is lame in the first couple of strides this will be a positive test.

X-rays are the only way to accurately diagnose Bone Spavin

Treatment

Farrier

Farrier treatment is aimed at helping the horse's action and speeding up the ossification of the joint, this can be done by trimming the toe and letting the heels become longer. As the horse will be winging in and placing its foot medially to the mid line of the stride, Lateral Extensions with a Set toe can be used to force the foot to land directly under the hock fusing the joint more quickly.

Other farriery option include

- Good foot Trim
- Shortening the toe
- Set Toe
- Graduated heels
- Use of wedged pads
- Lateral Extension

Once the joint has ossified then the use of a set toe /raised heel shoe will help with the brake over, in less severe cases a lateral extension will help direct the brake over towards the centre of the tarso-metatarsal joint.

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Vet

Veterinary Treatment is limited and is not always needed, this can include Pain Relief & an Altered Exercise Program.

Prognosis

As Bone Spavin is a Degenerative Joint Disease it can only be given a guarded prognosis, and in more severe cases can be unfavourably

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