

Heritage Downs

...The Natural Choice

Rain Scald- Causes, cures and preventions!

Rain Scald/ Rain Rot or 'streptothricosis' is a common skin disease in horses, most prevalent in warm, humid areas and wet seasons, and usually appearing within 2-5 days of continuous rain.

It most often occurs around a horse's back and neck, sometimes showing a pattern as to the way the rain runs off the animal's coat. The lesions look similar to those of mud fever/greasy heel.

What causes Rain Scald?

The organism 'dermatophilus congolensis' causes rain scald. It is spread from horse to horse by direct contact, contaminated tack and grooming equipment, insects and external parasites and has **not** been proven to live in dirt or soil. There has to be extreme moisture present, like heavy rainfall. Horses with thick coats are more likely to keep the moisture close to their skin, which helps the organism to thrive. The skin has to be damaged from an insect bite, cut or scrape to enable the organism to get into the epidermis. A horse can be a carrier of the organism and not show any signs of rain scald.

How does Rain Scald appear?

In the early stages of the disease, rough, raised bumps often can be felt before they can be seen. These develop into crusty scabs and matted tufts of hair, and when removed will uncover a moist, reddish ulcer in the skin. This most commonly occurs on the animals in areas that continuously get wet and drain poorly, such as along the backline.

Treatment of Rain Scald

Where possible, keep the horse in a dry, clean stable and separate affected horse from other horses.

First step is to thoroughly wet the horse and use an anti-bacterial and anti-septic shampoo such as **Heritage Downs Sulphate-free Shampoo**, and let sit for 10 minutes, then rinse. The anti-bacterial formulation will help kill the organism.

Follow with **Heritage Downs Sulphate-free Conditioner**, and again let sit for 10 minutes as this will soften scabs and aid in removal. The scabs need to be removed as they hold the organism to the horse's skin. Remove the scabs slowly and gently as this can be painful for your horse, sometimes it takes a couple of days working a little at a time.

Any scabs and hair clumps must be wrapped and disposed of carefully as to not reinfect the horse or other horses.

Once the affected area is clean and dry, the next step is to apply **Heritage Downs Greasy Heel Cream**, which is an all purpose anti-bacterial ointment that will double as barrier against moisture.

Continue this treatment every couple of days until condition has healed.

- During this recovery time it is necessary to remove any other factors which may add to the cause of the disease such as insect bites. **Heritage Downs Bug Spray** provides a safe and effective natural repellent against mosquitoes, midges, flies, ticks etc., without using harsh chemicals.
- Horses with thick coats should be clipped so moisture will not be held on the skin.
- The best way to prevent spread of the disease is to disinfect brushes, blankets, rugs and any gear used on an infected horse.
- Always wash your hands thoroughly after working with an infected horse.
- Use **Heritage Downs Stable Spray** to eliminate the bacteria in stable areas. The organism can persist for as long as four months, so all areas need to be treated regularly. If the horse has a favourite place he likes to rub, like a stall door or fence, it can become a source of the organism and needs to be treated also.
- In paddocked horses, ensure rugs are waterproof and the horse is dry before putting on.

Remember, prevention is better than cure and good hygiene is the best safeguard against this disease.

**For more information or for your nearest stockist,
call Heritage Downs on 1300 857 727**

