

## **Examination for Lameness**

Lameness examination generally starts with the simple tests and is often confirmed by diagnostic anaesthesia. For example if we think the horse is lame in the knee then we anaesthetise the knee joint and if this abolishes the lameness then we have a definitive diagnosis and we can proceed to x-rays and other tests.

### *Palpation*

Examination generally starts with palpation of the various joints for swelling.

### *Trotting*

This is followed by trotting to determine which leg is sore and the grade of lameness.

### *Lunging or Riding*

Sometimes horses are examined on the lunge or under saddle.

### *Hoof Testers*

These are used to apply pressure to the hooves to rule in or rule out soreness.

Common causes of hoof lameness are

- 1 Sore heels
- 2 Corns in the heel
- 3 Stone bruises
- 4 Abscess
- 5 Pain on the toe

### *Flexion tests*

Flexion tests involves bending the particular joint at an appropriate tension for a certain period or time. Each vet has a good idea of what is a normal flexion result for a particular horse after considering breed, age and other factors.

### *Diagnostic anaesthesia*

This involves anaesthesia of a specific joint, tendon or area of the leg to localize the lameness.

### *Radiology*

X-rays are often taken to examine bone structures. Baldivis Vet Hospital has high detail digital radiographs.

### *Ultrasound*

Ultrasound is useful to examine non bone structures such as tendons and the soft tissue of certain joints such as the stifle joint

### *Lameness due to pain within a joint*

Lameness due to pain within a joint varies from sprains right through to fractures.

### *Lameness due to Ligament or Tendon injury*

Generally this type of lameness is located by palpation then confirmed by ultrasound. In certain situations diagnostic anaesthesia of the area is required to find the cause.

*Muscle problems*

Some muscle tears are easy to detect while others require the skilled hands of a “horse chiropractor” or muscle manipulator.