



HELLO HEAVY LOVERS AND WELCOME TO

December

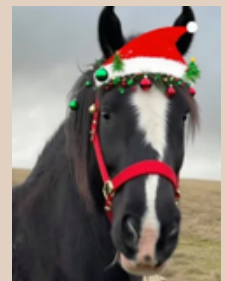
As the year winds down and the festive spirit begins to sparkle, I want to extend my warmest welcome to you all for the month of December. There's a special kind of magic that settles over HHH at this time of year—a quieter, gentler feeling that reminds us of the true meaning of warmth, kindness, and giving.

December, for us, is always a time of deep reflection and immense gratitude. We look back on the progress made by horses like Luka, who arrived needing so much TLC, and has finally found his forever family. Every success story is a testament to the dedication of our incredible team of volunteers and our loyal supporters. The holiday season often brings into sharp focus those who are most in need, and that includes the vulnerable horses who rely on HHH for shelter and rehabilitation.

This Christmas, our greatest wish is to continue providing comfort, care, and a second chance for every horse that crosses our path. Your continued generosity ensures their stalls are warm, their bellies are full, and they receive the specialized care—from farriers to chiropractors—that they deserve. May your December be filled with joy, peace, and the company of those you love.

A Word from Diesel

I have been here now for 7 years, 1 week and 2 days so I practically own the place - you're welcome ;) I want to thank you for being a vital part of the HHH family and for helping us give the gift of hope and healing this holiday season, that I was given 7 years (1 week and 2 days) ago. I have come a long way, which wouldn't be possible but for the likes of you guys. Thank you from the bottom of my back legs.



Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

President's
Ponderings

RESCUE ROUNDUP (INS AND OUTS)

Exciting news! Please help us welcome Katie!



At approximately 20 years old, this gorgeous 15hh Clydesdale/ASH mare is incredibly sweet and loving. We are so grateful to her mum for recognizing Katie needed specialized care, and for trusting us to provide a happy, well-cared-for life for her girl. First up a session with Matt and then a dental check-up, but she came to us in basically good condition.



Welcome home, Katie!"



Spotlight on Ozzy



Ozzy has been part of the HHH herd for just over a year, and in that time, he's shown remarkable resilience. When he arrived, he needed extensive chiropractic and bodywork, along with ongoing support for hoof health.

More recently, Ozzy was diagnosed with a twisted pelvis, requiring careful management to avoid overexertion.

Unfortunately, his hoof issues have continued, and he's now begun treatment for canker—a rare and challenging condition in Australia that few professionals have encountered.

Thankfully, Dr. Heidi at Borambola Valley Veterinary Podiatry Centre has taken Ozzy into her care, researching extensively and consulting with international specialists to create a targeted treatment plan. In addition to canker, Ozzy is also dealing with coronitis, inflammation in all four coronet bands. While an autoimmune disorder is suspected, his bloodwork hasn't confirmed it.



Spotlight on Ozzy - continued



Ozzy is receiving antibiotics and a custom compound powder, mixed by Dr. Heidi, applied directly to the affected hoof. Her dedication is giving Ozzy the best chance at recovery.

Dr. Heidi 03/11/2025:

“Starting to dry up – tomorrow or Wednesday I’ll sedate and do a light debridement and two bandage changes.”

(Debridement is a medical procedure used to treat a wound by removing dead, damaged, or infected tissue. The main goal of debridement is to clean the wound bed, which eliminates the conditions that allow bacteria to grow and promotes the growth of new, healthy tissue, accelerating the healing process).

It seems the canker treatment that Dr Heidi gave him worked!! We believe the canker is now gone, and we are now concentrating on clearing the Coronitis he has in all four coronet bands (just above his hooves). The next couple of weeks will give us an idea of whether he will beat it.

We’ll continue to keep you updated on Ozzy’s condition as more information becomes available. Thank you for being part of his journey and supporting the care that makes healing possible.



Breathing Easy: Understanding Equine Asthma

Equine asthma, once referred to as heaves or recurrent airway obstruction (RAO), is now recognized as part of a broader spectrum of chronic, non-infectious respiratory conditions affecting horses. This umbrella term includes both mild and severe forms of airway inflammation, and it's gaining attention as one of the most common and impactful health issues in modern equine care.

At its core, equine asthma is an inflammatory response in the lungs, triggered by environmental irritants such as dust, mould spores, and ammonia from bedding or manure. Horses with asthma may show signs like coughing, nasal discharge, laboured breathing, and reduced performance. In severe cases, they may develop a “heave line” — a visible ridge along the abdomen caused by increased respiratory effort.

Recent research has highlighted the importance of early detection and environmental management. Unlike infectious respiratory diseases, equine asthma is not contagious, but it can be progressive and debilitating if left untreated. Veterinarians now use endoscopy, bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL), and lung function tests to diagnose and monitor the condition more accurately.

Treatment typically involves a combination of environmental changes and medication. Reducing exposure to airborne irritants is key — this includes using low-dust bedding, soaking hay, improving ventilation, and keeping horses outdoors when possible. Medications such as corticosteroids and bronchodilators may be prescribed to reduce inflammation and open airways. Exciting developments in equine medicine include inhalation therapy, where horses receive medication via specially designed masks, similar to human asthma treatments. This targeted approach minimizes systemic side effects and improves efficacy.

Equine asthma is a lifelong condition, but with proper management, affected horses can lead comfortable and active lives. Owners, trainers, and veterinarians must work together to create a low-irritant environment and monitor respiratory health closely.

As awareness grows, so does the potential for better outcomes and improved quality of life for horses with asthma — making it a vital topic in equine health today.



DID YOU KNOW

Thinking Like a Horse: The Surprising Depth of Equine Cognition

When we think of intelligent animals, horses might not be the first to come to mind. Yet recent research into equine cognition reveals that horses possess a rich mental life, capable of learning, memory, emotional awareness, and even problem-solving.

Horses are prey animals, which means their survival has long depended on keen observation and quick decision-making. Studies show they can read human facial expressions, distinguish between familiar and unfamiliar people, and even remember emotional experiences associated with specific individuals. This emotional memory helps them navigate social relationships – both with humans and other horses.

One fascinating area of study is equine communication and intention-reading. Horses can interpret subtle cues like pointing gestures or gaze direction to locate hidden food. In experiments, they've demonstrated the ability to seek help from humans when faced with an unsolvable task – a behaviour known as “social referencing,” which is also seen in dogs and some primates.

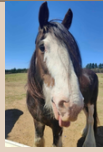
Problem-solving in horses often involves trial and error, but it's not purely mechanical. For example, some horses learn to open gates or manipulate objects to access food or escape enclosures. These actions suggest a level of causal reasoning and adaptability.

Memory also plays a key role. Horses can remember training routines and environmental layouts for years. They're capable of episodic-like memory, recalling specific events and contexts, which is crucial for learning and safety.

Interestingly, horses may also possess a rudimentary form of self-awareness. In mirror tests, while they don't pass in the same way as dolphins or elephants, some show signs of recognizing that the reflection is not another horse – a subtle but intriguing hint at higher cognitive processing.

Understanding equine cognition isn't just academic – it has practical implications for training, welfare, and human-horse relationships. By recognizing the mental and emotional capacities of horses, we can create more empathetic, effective, and enriching environments for these remarkable animals.

Update - Luka



When Luka, a roughly 14-year-old Clydesdale Gelding, came to HHH in August 2024, he was badly in need of tender loving care. His rehabilitation began almost immediately with a coordinated series of expert treatments: first, from our exceptional farrier, Matt Fordham, followed by gentle bodywork from Sinead at Boyne Equine Health, and subsequent chiropractic sessions with James Picton Equine Chiropractor.



Following successful treatment on his top teeth in October, Luka was finally comfortable taking the bit, marking him as almost ready for rehoming.

When he was finally ready for rehoming in mid 2025, he was lucky to go live with Rikkie and Mike who love him so very much. They said Luka calmly accepts new people or objects in his environment and since his arrival he is already showing more confidence with them. They said they really fell in love with his personality. Mike referred to him as “an absolute love bug, who loves everyone and everyone loves him!

Update - Luka (continued)

Mike said Luka found his place in the new herd quickly and has always been confident around other horses. Rikkie and Mike say Luka is very enthusiastic to get to his food and responds to their calls. He comes trotting up to the gate and they love it when his head pops up in the herd as soon as he hears their calls and always trots up with such alertness.

They said he is full of personality! He is very willing when asked to do something he may not have experienced. For example, going into tunnels under roads or going under the bridge on Cotter Rd which leads to Equestrian Park.



Update - Luka (continued)

Mike said Luka just loves his food and treats. He said they are working on mutual respect and trust. Around the yards Mike said he needs to be consistent with what he expects Luka to do so that they both remain safe.

Mike said that on rides he is so trusting of what he asks him to do and says they will continue to build this bond. He said Luka is calm and willing and this allows both of them to “push the envelope” when out on rides. The more time they spend together in challenging situations the more they will grow as trusted mates.



Mike is confident the basics are there and says they have made an exceptional start. Expectation are that they will spend many challenging and rewarding moments together. Above all they will have fun. Mike said the the whole experience at HHH has taught him a lot and said he and Luka are very fortunate. He wishes to thank Rikkie for her persistence in finding him a new mate. Rikkie added that: “Luka really is one of a kind and you can’t help falling in love with him. He loves life, people and wants everyone’s undivided attention to solely on him. It is an absolute joy to have Luka in our lives”.

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Not ALL hard work

Who is Clyde??



Ol' Clyde here has the devil inside. I promised Rikkie I would not make her the brunt of my jokes but habits are really hard to break and I'll start from today.

Reader Puzzle

Logic Puzzle: The Mystery of the Stables

Problem:

Four horses — Blaze, Storm, Willow, and Echo, live in four adjacent stables numbered 1 to 4. Each horse has a favourite treat (carrots, apples, sugar cubes, or oats), a preferred activity (jumping, racing, grazing, or trotting), and a unique colour (black, white, chestnut, or grey).

Using the clues below, can you determine which horse lives in which stable, each horse's favourite treat, activity, and colour?

Clues:

1. Blaze lives immediately to the left of the horse who loves apples.
2. The chestnut horse enjoys grazing.
3. Echo lives in stable 3.
4. The horse who loves sugar cubes is next to the horse who prefers jumping.
5. Storm is the black horse.
6. The horse in stable 1 enjoys racing.
7. Willow does not live next to Storm.
8. The grey horse loves oats.
9. The horse who enjoys trotting lives next to the horse who loves carrots.
10. The white horse lives in stable 2.

| Stable | Horse | Color | Treat | Activity |
|--------|-------|-------|-------|----------|
| 1 | | | | |
| 2 | | | | |
| 3 | | | | |
| 4 | | | | |

Q and A topic for this month. Nope. None received. BUT if you have anything for January, please email to the below by:

Friday December 19th 2025 via newsletter@heavyhorseheaven.com.au



Hoofbeat Herald

LAST MONTH'S READER PUZZLE SOLUTION



Diesel

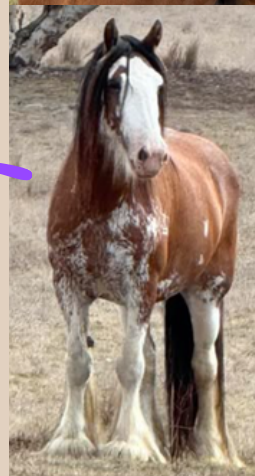
Geronimo

Mem

Pharoah

Ozzy

Duke



Match the guests to their names -
hint - there are more pics than
names 🤔

And the "spare" guy is Captain



LAST MONTH'S READER PUZZLE SOLUTION Continued



This isn't a trick question - there are 35.