

# December Newsletter



## Festive Enrichment Ideas for Horses & Donkeys

Winter often means more stabling, less turnout, and greater risk of boredom for our equine companions. A few simple enrichment activities can make a big difference to their wellbeing, encouraging natural behaviours and supporting calm, content horses and donkeys

## Food-Based Fun

**Forage Boxes** Fill a shallow box with hay, chopped fibre, and a few safe treats (carrot, apple, herbal nuggets).

**Slow-Feeders & Treat Balls** Small-hole nets and floor-level feeders help extend eating time. Treat balls filled with low-calorie pellets provide gentle entertainment.



## Physical Play

**Equine-Safe Balls** Durable balls designed for horses and donkeys offer playful pushing and rolling opportunities.

**Mini In-Hand Courses** Use poles, cones, or a simple winter “adventure trail” to create short, engaging walks when turnout is limited.

**Scratching Pads** Mounted brushes or scratch boards provide a safe outlet for natural grooming behaviour.

## Sensory & Stable Enrichment

**Stable Mirrors** Shatter-proof acrylic mirrors can reduce stress and weaving, offering a sense of companionship—especially helpful for donkeys.

**Scent Exploration** Introduce safe scents like peppermint or chamomile on a cloth placed out of reach. A small, occasional change keeps things interesting.

**Mounted Puzzle Panels** Commercial stable toys with flaps or sliders encourage curiosity and problem-solving without frustration.

## Social Enrichment

**Grooming Time** A few minutes of extra grooming can mimic mutual grooming and strengthen bonds.

**Buddy Contact** Even short periods of safe social interaction over a fence or stable door can boost wellbeing.

## Safety First

Introduce new items gradually, supervise at first, avoid sugary treats, and check toys regularly for wear. Ensure nothing can tangle legs or catch halters.

A small amount of enrichment can brighten the winter months—an ideal seasonal gift for the horses and donkeys in your care.



## Office Opening Hours

**Christmas Eve** – 8AM-5PM

**Christmas Day** – Emergencies only

**Boxing Day**– Emergencies only

**27th December**– Emergencies only

**28th December**– Emergencies only

**29th December**– 8AM – 5PM

**30th December**– 8AM-5PM

**New Year's Eve** – 8AM-5PM

**New Year's Day**- Emergencies only



During the Christmas break we have dedicated Equine Vets on call for emergencies.

If you are worried enough to think you may need a vet, then please call, we would rather speak to you or see your equine friend if you are concerned.

For 24-hour emergency treatment please ring us on **01297304007**



We would like to welcome Alice to our team! Alice has worked in both ambulatory practice and more recently in a hospital environment. Alice enjoys solving medical mysteries and is looking forward to working within and knowledgeable and friendly team. Outside of working she enjoys being creative and enjoys making her own clothes and accessories. Alice is also dipping her toe into gardening.

We are sadly saying goodbye to one of our Veterinary Surgeons, Jo this month. We wish her all the best with pursuing her passion to work closely within the charity sector. She will be thoroughly missed by everyone at summerleaze and all her clients.

Good luck Jo!



Contact us:

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