

SENSITEST

THE COMPLETE  
ALLERGY SERVICE



ALLERGIES  
& YOUR HORSE

IMPROVING  
YOUR HORSE'S  
WELLBEING

INNOVATION IN  
ANIMAL HEALTHCARE

 **Avacta**  
ANIMAL HEALTH

## WHAT IS AN ALLERGY?

An allergy is a reaction of the immune system to a common substance known as an allergen. Allergens include foods, pollens from trees, grasses and flowering plants, moulds, dust, storage mites and insects.

Allergens can enter the body by inhalation, ingestion or absorption through the skin. If your horse is repeatedly exposed to an allergen, their immune system may react, often resulting in poor health and loss of performance.

Allergies can be immediate (classical) or occur within a few hours or days (delayed).

### SYMPTOMS OF ALLERGY

- Dermatological signs – rubbing, particularly mane and tail, rashes and hair loss
- Respiratory signs – headshaking, chronic cough, laboured breathing, nasal discharge and swollen, watery eyes
- Gastrointestinal signs – weight loss, recurrent bouts of low grade colic and loose droppings
- Behavioural signs – loss of performance and temperamental changes





**UK NATIVE  
SPECIES OF  
PLANT  
ALLERGENS**

## **MOST COMMON ALLERGIC SYMPTOMS**

### **PRURITUS**

A common dermatological term used to describe the unpleasant sensation that causes the frequent rubbing, itching and biting of the skin.

### **SUMMER SEASONAL RECURRENT DERMATITIS (SSRD)**

Commonly known as 'sweet itch', this is hypersensitivity to the saliva of the *Culicoides* species. Sweet itch tends to be seasonal, from spring to autumn when the midge is present. The desire to itch and rub at the affected site (usually mane and tail) is intense, subsequently causing infection and can be extremely debilitating in severe cases.

### **URTICARIA**

Commonly known as hives, urticaria can follow exposure to a whole range of possible allergens including feed components, pollens and moulds.

### **RECURRENT AIRWAY OBSTRUCTION (RAO) AND CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE (COPD)**

These respiratory diseases are thought to be associated with inhalation of environmental allergens and create an increase in mucus production and inflammation of the airways. These diseases are debilitating and if the condition remains undiagnosed and untreated it can cause irreversible damage to lung tissue.

### **HEADSHAKING**

Allergic headshaking can range from snorting and sneezing to severe shaking of the head. Chronic headshaking can be extremely traumatic and distressing to the horse.

# IDENTIFICATION

There are a number of potential causes for your horse's allergy and your vet will conduct a thorough work-up to identify these. As part of this work-up, your vet may suggest carrying out a **SENSITEST®** allergy test. Your vet simply has to take a small sample of blood and send it to us.

The **SENSITEST®** allergy test identifies the level of antibodies in the blood that may correspond to the clinical signs of allergy. These results pinpoint the offending allergens and the level of reaction. Our results pack provides a class score of 0-5 against each allergen. The results will be a useful aid for you and your vet in diagnosis and treatment.

The cost of your test and any treatment may be covered by your horse insurance. Please check with your vet and insurance company for details.



# TREATMENT

## ELIMINATION DIET

In cases where offending allergens appear on the food panel, an elimination diet is advised. Avoidance of scoring allergens is necessary for a period of 10-12 weeks.

## IMMUNOTHERAPY

If environmental and/or insect allergens are identified as the cause, then avoiding these completely may prove more challenging. One of the most effective treatments for environmental and insect allergens is allergen-specific immunotherapy.

It is one of the safest and most cost effective treatments for allergy and unlike other therapies it targets the root cause of the allergy and provides long term relief from the symptoms.

"I'm so pleased this test was available, now with the allergen specific immunotherapy Lola's quality of life and performance is much improved"

# SEROLOGICAL ALLERGY TESTS

The **SENSITEST**<sup>®</sup> horse panels test for these allergens using a small sample of blood:

## Food Allergens

Wheat  
Oats  
Barley  
Rye  
Alfalfa  
Carrot  
Sugar Beet  
Soybean  
Corn (maize)  
Flaxseed  
Pea  
Cod Liver Oil

## Insects

Culicoides  
Black Fly  
Mosquito  
Horse Fly  
Stable Fly  
House Fly

## Indoor Allergens

*Alternaria alternata*  
*Aspergillus mix*  
*Cladosporium herbarum*  
*Penicillium mix*  
Grain Mill Dust  
*D. pteronyssinus*  
*D. farinae*  
*E. maynei*  
*L. destructor*  
*A. siro*  
*T. putrescentiae*

## Outdoor Allergens

### Grasses

Rye, perennial  
Timothy  
Orchard Grass (cocksfoot)  
Sweet Vernal  
Meadow Fescue  
Meadow Grass  
(Kentucky bluegrass)  
Red top, bent grass

### Weeds and Crops

Plantain  
Mugwort  
Ragweed  
Dock, yellow/curly  
Lamb's Quarter  
Daisy  
Dandelion  
Nettle  
Clover  
Oil Seed Rape

### Trees & Shrubs

Alder  
Birch  
Hazel  
Privet  
Oak  
Beech  
Ash  
Scots Pine  
Willow  
Horse Chestnut  
Sycamore

The panels have been extended to include more allergens relevant in the UK/North European climatic zones.

**DEVELOPED &  
MANUFACTURED  
IN THE UK**

**ASK YOUR VET FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**