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Good morning! Now that the higher summer temperatures and rain and insects are out in full force, I thought it would be worth while to talk a little about SWEET ITCH. This is a condition that affects many horses, and it is nothing other than an allergic reaction! Horses can be allergic to the saliva of biting insects! Horses start rubbing themselves against anything they can find and for some horses the condition becomes so annoying that they actually start losing weight and get very short tempered. Mostly the upper neck, manes, forelock and the upper part of the tail are affected. In severe cases the hair falls out, the skin becomes thickened and can even become infected. Those of us that have a horse that breaks out in the itches every spring know the frustration of dealing with this every year. Even a bite from just a few insects can trigger the reaction. So the primary manner of prevention is to prevent the bites as far as we can. Stabling horses before sunset and turning them out after sunrise helps. These are the times when the midges are most active. Putting screens on the stable windows further prevents them from getting to your horse. Applying a good insect repellent 3x a day. Before turning them out. Once during the day and when you bring them in for the evening. Avoid letting them graze in areas where there is standing water. These are the places where the midges are the most. Letting them wear a special fly sheet is often the only solution for horses that suffer a lot. It is important that the rug covers the body, the neck and also the face and ears. When your horse is already scratching... give us a call or come have a chat to us at the clinic about medications, creams and shampoos that can help to reduce the itch and make them feel better again. Nobody likes itching all the time and we all want happy horses with beautiful coats! Have a lovely week with your horses. Dr Marleece. Parys Animal Hospital. 🐛🐛