

# OFF THE HOOF



“A word to the wise ain’t necessary – it’s the stupid ones that need the advice.”  
*Bill Cosby*

**A**s I sit to write this article it seems hard to imagine that a week ago I was on the sunny beaches of Benidorm whilst England was in the grips of appalling weather. Today I have many layers on and a woolly hat. – And that’s indoors!

Layers work for horses too. Sometimes I believe it is better to put two lighter layers than one thick heavy one. At least if we have a warmer day one layer can be removed for a few hours and easily replaced.

If your horse is spending more hours in the stable owing to the weather try and think of more ways to relieve the boredom. A radio helps and there are several mineral licks on the market which are presented on a rope or in a ball which they have to work harder for. Even if you usually hay on the floor try using a hay net with smaller holes as for haylage and if you do not have one or do not consider it big enough put one net inside another misaligning the holes so the hay lasts longer. You may feel the need to give your horse extra feed in the cold weather. Think about what you are feeding. Perhaps instead of giving an extra feed it may be better to divide one feed in two and add extra carrots and apples.

Speedi-Beet is a good source of fibre and can be used after ten minutes of soaking. As it is unmolassed and 95% sugar free it helps to keep the weight on and adds condition without the fizz. It has been awarded the seal of approval from the Laminitis Trust so for those prone to Laminitis or Cushings it is a valuable feed and

offers great value for money. On colder days try making it with hot water- they love it.

Dried grass also has a place in any feeding regime particularly at this time of year

It goes without saying but I am saying it anyway – do not forget to worm your animals be it dog, cat or horse but in the case of dogs and cats they also need de-fleaing as they are both of the same cycle and one is useless without the other.

There is now no doubt the recession is hitting hard and the price of horses has dropped again. Some people are now looking to give their horses away. Whilst last year I was looking for a 12.2 and could not find one I am now turning them away. Really cracking little ponies too. They are all too late though as we now have a pony called “Rosie”. Although she is not the most beautiful of ponies she has a beautiful temperament and so far has not put a hoof wrong.

All the animal charities report they have more animals than they with cope with and over the Christmas period there was no room at the inn for dogs in the Cleethorpes area and I ended up with one which had been abandoned on Christmas Eve. She cost me a fortune as she had a skin condition and had not had injections but the normal kennels had no room and I have since heard they are closing. It does not bode good for the future and I now wish I had done more to try and save H.A.R.A. from closing.

Luckily I have found a super home for the Staffy I took in and have visiting rights!

More horses are being given over to the charities, which leaves them struggling financially. But – you can help. I would like you to save all the used postage stamps you can and any old or damaged mobile phones. These can be turned into much needed cash. Last year Bransby Home Rest for Horses raised £6,000 but with your help I am sure we can increase that. Either drop them off to me or to Caroline in the Post Office and I will make sure they

get them. Ask your friends to save them too. It costs you nothing but means such a lot to those horses and ponies.

It could be that many more horses will go to sales and possibly be exported for meat. This trade should be abolished as it is totally unnecessary to export live horses. In a recent report conducted by the World Horse Welfare it was found 100,000 horses are transported each year through many countries in appalling conditions. In shipments totalling 1519 horses, 4 out of every 5 were considered unfit for transport and had one or more clinical signs of disease. Not only is this totally unacceptable for any livestock it raises the question of disease spreading in this country. World Horse Welfare now has just over 70,500 signatures on its petitions but it desperately needs more in order to strengthen its case to the European Commission. It costs you nothing. You can make a difference. If you love animals please help them and sign the petition on line at [www.makeanoise.co.uk](http://www.makeanoise.co.uk) or call 01953497262 for more information of how you may help.

Whilst browsing through a horse book the other day I stopped on the “Ageing” page and the teeth which said unscrupulous sellers of horse-flesh could attempt to “doctor” the age of the animals teeth. “However, what is tolerated in the case of lady film stars, actresses and the like – the majority whom suspend the laws of time around the age of twenty one years – it is definitely not permissible when you, the innocent purchaser, are looking for a long-eared and four-footed friend.” It made me smile.

Closer to home it is hoped to exchange the Public Bridleway which runs down by the side of the church to the other side of the church yard. This would make it

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