

The best job in the world

Meet our new columnist – **Marie Rippingale**, head equine nurse at Scarsdale Vets – who will be sharing her experiences as an REVN, G-SQP and horse owner

My job working as a registered equine veterinary nurse is fascinating: I get to spend all day working with horses, ponies and even donkeys and caring for them to make them feel better. Things are not always plain sailing, and at times, the job is physically and emotionally demanding, but I still maintain that it's the best job in the world!

I see all sorts of things day to day, I'm very lucky as my job is very varied and I work with a fantastic team.

As well as caring for our inpatients, I will usually be involved in lameness examinations and work-ups, assisting with general anaesthesia and surgical operations, not to mention helping with ambulatory procedures out in the field and helping to run the pharmacy. I get to use my full range of skills as an REVN and I will commonly take radiographs, catheterise patients, carry out wound care and apply bandages, administer medication and take blood samples.

Being an REVN, G-SQP and a horse owner, the lines between my work and home life often get blurred. This hap-



pened to me in 2013 when my horse, Chaplin, went lame. I assisted with his lameness work-up and when he was diagnosed I got a new appreciation of how our clients must feel when they are given a diagnosis about their horses. I am a keen event rider, and felt that my world had been rocked by the diagnosis. This is where my vocation as an REVN came into play, and I followed all the advice given to

me by the vets and nurses at Scarsdale. Due to careful management, Chaplin is happily competing in affiliated eventing with no sign of his lameness reoccurring.

ADVISING OTHERS

As an REVN, G-SQP and a horse owner I have scrutinised and modified my worming regime for my own horse. This has helped me to advise and help the other liveries on my

yard with their worming programmes. All the horses are now on the same worming programme, we all perform worm egg counts and poo pick regularly.

I found one of the biggest problems with worming is getting an accurate weight for the horses, so I bought some weigh tapes and taught the liveries on my yard how to weigh their horses so we could dose them all accurately.

Having done this at the yard where I keep my horse, I am always happy to advise and help clients that come to the practice with this issue.

I feel that wearing the different hats of an REVN, G-SQP and horse owner puts me in a special position, as I can appreciate situations from all perspectives. I can give owners practical advice, as a lot of the time I have had to tackle their problems with my own horse. I feel my role as an REVN has been enhanced by owning my own horse. I now have a greater appreciation of the emotional upset felt by our clients when their horse comes to the vets and is diagnosed.

Having put my own horse through a rehabilitation programme, I also understand how much commitment this takes and how much outside support is required. I am lucky to be in a position where my different roles complement each other, and allow me to give holistic, practice advice and care to our patients and clients alike.

● For an insight on how Marie has developed her career, see A conversation with, page 15.