

# Horse Answers

Every month leading trainers, instructors, feed experts and vets offer you free, professional advice - whatever your problem



**Horse Answers Editor**  
**REBECCA STATHAM**

If you have a question for one of our experts, whatever the topic, send it to [rebecca.statham@bauermedia.co.uk](mailto:rebecca.statham@bauermedia.co.uk)

## Meet our experts



**WENDY TALBOT**  
 is a vet at Zoetis



**CLAIRE LILLEY**  
 is a riding instructor and horse trainer



**LYNN RUSSELL**  
 is a show horse producer and trainer



**SARA GALLOP**  
 is a BHSII, an international dressage rider and manages Summerhouse Equestrian Centre



**ALISON KENWARD**  
 is a BHS qualified trainer and runs Solitaire Dressage



**JASON WEBB**  
 is a behaviour pro who runs Australian Horsemanship



**HELEN SPENCE**  
 is an equine behaviour and training consultant



**NICKY MACKENZIE**  
 is the marketing manager at SEIB Insurance Brokers



**CLARE BARFOOT**  
 BSc (Hons) RNutr, is an equine nutrition expert at Spillers



**DANNY CHAMBERS**  
 BVSc MSc MRCVS, is a vet at Arden House Veterinary Hospital



**DR KIRSTIE PICKLES**  
 is an equine vet at Scarsdale Vets - part of the XLEquine group



**JOANNA PALMER**  
 is a BSc (Hons), nutritionist at Allen & Page Quality Horse Feeds



**RICHARD MAXWELL**  
 is a horse behaviourist and Masterson Method practitioner

## HORSE CARE

### Worm egg counts explained

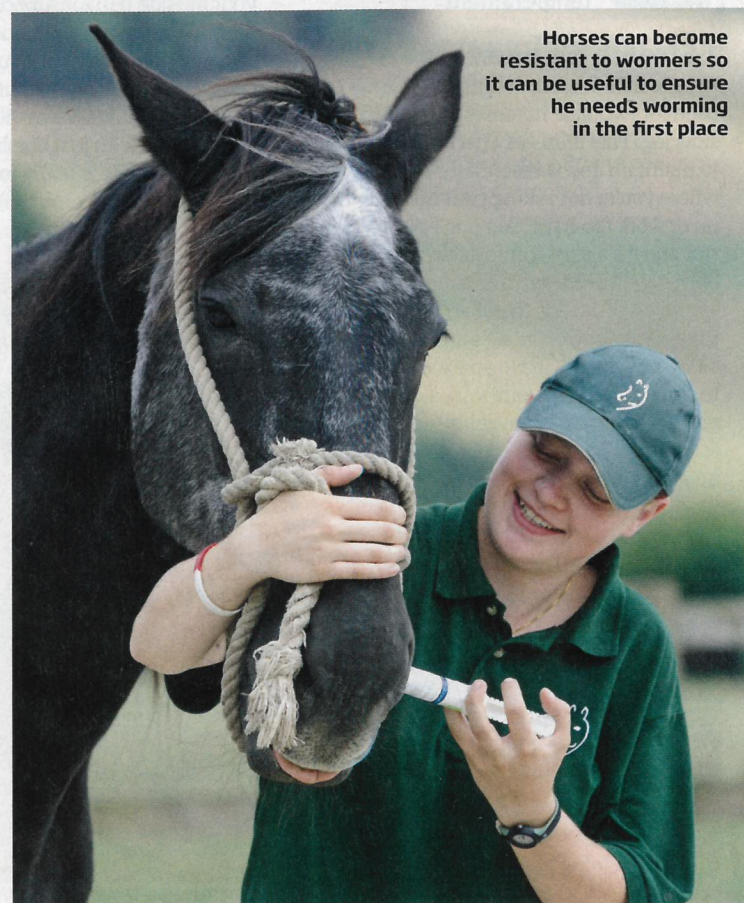
**Q** How can I be sure that my horse needs to be wormed?  
*Carole Jenkins, Oxfordshire*

**Vet Wendy Talbot says:**

**A** Between spring turnout time and October the best method is to use a faecal worm egg count (FWEC) every six to eight weeks. To do this you'll need to take a dropping sample using a collection kit provided by the lab that will carry out the count. This will identify the horses that need dosing for redworm and those that don't. Using regular FWECs saves the cost of worming horses unnecessarily during the summer, while protecting the health of those that do need treating. It also helps to preserve the effectiveness of wormers, by slowing resistance.

During winter, FWECs are less useful. Many horses spend less

time at grass and so won't pick up worms through grazing - worms also don't breed in such great numbers when the temperature drops. On this basis FWECs can be misleading simply because fewer eggs may be produced. Despite this drop in reproduction, encysted small redworm (ESRW), lying dormant in the gut wall, remain a threat to your horse's health over the winter. These won't show up in a standard FWEC so during winter and early spring it's highly advisable to worm with a specific wormer to treat for ESRW. Tapeworm and bots won't show up in a standard FWEC either so you should also treat for these, on your vet or SQP's recommendation. Alternatively, for tapeworm, you can ask your vet to conduct a separate tapeworm test using a blood or saliva sample.



Horses can become resistant to wormers so it can be useful to ensure he needs worming in the first place

## RIDING

### End the tug of war!

**Q** My horse keeps snatching at the bit when I ride him. How can I stop this?  
*Paul Connor, Northumbria*

**Dressage trainer Claire Lilley says:**

**A** It can depend on what type of bit you're using. I prefer a simple 'lozenge' bit but, essentially, the way to teach your horse to accept the bit is with frequent half-halts. To do this:

- Sit up tall on both seat bones and support your horse with your legs (do this by keeping your thighs on)
- Engage your back and stomach muscles
- Ensure your elbows are by your sides, keep your hands low, either side of the front of your saddle, and maintain a steady contact (you should be able to feel what his mouth is doing with your fingers on the reins)
- Ask your horse to halt by bracing your back, and closing your legs, but without moving your hands - no pulling!
- When he stops, soften your muscle tone, without collapsing completely.

This 'stop, go' aid is a half-halt. Once you can balance your horse with your body, this will help him to relax his neck, reaching forwards into the contact. For more details check out my book, Stop, Go, Turn, and my DVD, both available at [www.clairelilley.com](http://www.clairelilley.com)



If your horse is pulling, check your bit and position when riding

## HORSE CARE

### Insure your horse for the correct price

**Q** Should you always insure your horse at his purchase price?  
*Emma Haywood, Surrey*

**Insurance expert Nicky Mackenzie says:**

**A** Insurance is about protecting your investment, so it's important to be aware that if something happens to your horse and he's not insured for his true value you'll not have the funds to pay for a replacement. Many horse owners insure for the veterinary fee cover and reduce the value of their horse to try and save on premiums, while other owners have been known to over insure in the hope of making a profit should anything happen to their horse.

It's important to be aware that the insurer will only pay the insured or market value, whichever is less; therefore there's no point in over insuring. Most insurers will accept an under-insurance of up to 50%.

Horses can be a considerable investment and it's wise to take out protection for this. It can be very short sighted to under-insure because if something does happen to your horse the insurer will not pay out for a replacement

of similar value if the premiums haven't been paid. Most insurers are happy to increase the value of the sum insured as the horse gains experience and success if it can be proved that his value has increased. By the very nature of the transaction, by taking out insurance a horse owner is accepting that they may need to call upon it. So it would be unwise to under insure and over-insuring is just a waste of money.



If your horse means the world to you, ensure he's protected with insurance

## BEHAVIOUR

### Making water fun

**Q** My horse refuses to walk through puddles. Why is this?  
*Rachel Gilbert, Leicestershire*

**Horse behaviourist Helen Spence says:**

**A** Horses are instinctively cautious of potential traps and are innately neophobic, i.e. born fearful of new or strange situations. They have to learn through positive experience that they are safe. If a horse has no opportunity to learn that water is safe, then he'll avoid it. It's also possible that your horse has had unpleasant experiences with puddles, perhaps someone used force to make him walk through. From his perspective, avoiding puddles is common sense due to depth perception. His feet tell him what the ground is like, and puddles can be scary because he can't work out the depth and what's below the surface. Your job is to show him that puddles can be fun and a pleasant experience, with the support of a puddle-loving horsey friend, work on the ground, and use of patience, food rewards and scratches. For more advice, visit [www.helenspencehorsesense.co.uk](http://www.helenspencehorsesense.co.uk)