

THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF FARRIERS



THE WELL SHOD HORSE

A **WELL SHOD HORSE** is the result of co-operation between the farrier, the owner ... and the horse.

The **farrier** brings to the job the skills and knowledge acquired through lengthy apprenticeship, intensive college training, and experience.

The **horseowner** can help the farrier make the best use of these skills by:

- making regular appointments as necessary for foot trimming and shoeing;
- giving adequate notice when additional farriery services are required;
- ensuring the horse is caught, settled and prepared with clean legs and feet, before the farrier arrives;
- making available a clean, well lit place, under cover if possible, with a firm, level surface to shoe on, or
- always arriving in time for appointments at the forge.

The **horse** will be better able to co-operate if used to handling, in order that it will stand quietly while the feet are picked up, trimmed and shod. Proper feeding and regular foot care - picking out the feet, oiling if necessary - help build strong horn, which makes good shoeing easier.

With co-operation from farrier, owner and horse alike, the best possible farriery service can be given in the interests of the horse - its comfort, well-being and usefulness over a long, active life.

POINTS OF SHOEING

Just as horses and ponies come in all shapes and sizes, so horseshoes and shoeing must vary according to the type of horse and the work it does. However, good farriery practice has some basic requirements:

1. The horse must be able to move freely, naturally and comfortably when shod. Good shoeing takes into account the natural line of balance through the limb of the individual horse - each horse is different, and so is its way of going.
2. The hoof evolved to offer a tough, protective, 'non slip' base capable of absorbing concussion without the covering of a metal shoe. Whatever shoe is used, the farrier seeks to interfere minimally with the natural foot function and to prevent any alteration of the hoof pastern axis (HPA).
3. As metal shoes prevent the feet wearing down, the farrier trims away excess horn to the correct level for weight distribution over the whole foot. The hoof wall should be trimmed to the best natural shape - a straight line from coronary band to ground surface, not flaring out or cut back too far. The shoe, chosen as the correct weight and size for the individual horse and the work it is to do, should be fitted level, with clean nail holes evenly spaced between the toe and the quarter. The shoe should be shaped to fit the foot accurately, with the clip bedded into the hoof wall to fit flush.
4. The shoe must be long enough to support the heel and ensure there is no loss of foot bearing surface.
5. When the shoe is fitted, it should appear like an extension of the level, well prepared foot, with no gaps between them. The nails, driven into sound hoof wall, should emerge a third of the way up the foot, and should be turned down into strong clenches, then rasped smooth. The nails should fit the nail holes so that they are level with the surface of the shoe.

To sum up, the well shod horse has:

- Shoes of correct weight and size, shaped to fit the foot;
- Level feet, correct limb alignment for free movement;
- No loss of foot bearing surface;
- Clenches in a regular line, smooth and firm into the hoof wall;
- And last but not least, an owner who realises that foot care is his or her day-to-day responsibility too.

THE SHOE FOR THE JOB

For optimum grip and safety, horses doing much fast work on grass or soft going, for example hunters, event horses, polo ponies - are often best with fullered concave shoes, close fitting, of adequate length with well sloped heels.

Horses doing mainly slower work or road work may be more effectively shod using plain shoes, fitted full to the foot especially from quarters to heel, with upright heels.

Horses used for competitive driving or long distance riding are often effectively shod with plain stamped or three-quarter fullered shoes.

All working horses' feet will need regular attention, usually at not more than six week intervals. When horses are shod, the shoes must be removed and the feet trimmed back as they grow, even if the shoes are not worn out.

FARRIERY, THE LAW AND YOU

The Farriers (Registration) Acts of 1975 and 1977 require anyone shoeing horses to register each year with the Farriers Registration Council. This includes people who only shoe their own horses. The prime aim of this law is to safeguard the welfare of the horse.

Anyone wishing to register should contact the Registrar of the Farriers Registration Council, who will explain the procedure. Normally, application is made on completion of an apprenticeship with an Approved Training Farrier. The apprenticeship involves attending regular college courses with an assessment successfully completed at each attendance.

Having passed the final examination held under the auspices of the Worshipful Company of Farriers, which is necessary for registration, the successful candidate may then use the letters Dip WCF after his or her name (Diploma of the Worshipful Company of Farriers). The equivalent before the 1975 Act was RSS (Registered Shoeing Smith).

The Worshipful Company of Farriers also conducts examinations for farriers already qualified, registered and in practice as proof of their enhanced competence. These are searching examinations requiring a very high standard of specialist knowledge and practical skills. These post graduate examinations are the Associateship of the Worshipful Company of Farriers (A WCF), formerly AFCL Associateship of the Farriers Company of London, and the Fellowship of the Worshipful Company of Farriers (FWCF).

All farriers' registrations must be renewed annually. Horseowners should make sure their farrier has a current registration certificate. The Farriers Registration Council publishes a full national list of all registered farriers, which is regularly updated, with addresses, telephone numbers, and county listings.

A Farrier should not be confused with a Blacksmith. A Farrier works with horses but needs training in blacksmithing to enable him to make shoes properly. A Blacksmith works with iron and may never have any contact with horses. A Blacksmith may have been trained in farriery and if so may shoe horses legally alongside his blacksmithing, providing he is a Registered Farrier.

USEFUL ADDRESSES

The Welfare Officer
British Horse Society
Stoneleigh Deer Park
Kenilworth,
Warwickshire
CV8 2XZ
Tel: 08701 202244

The Registrar
The Farriers Registration Council
Sefton House
Adam Court
Newark Road
Peterborough PE1 5PP
Tel: 01733 319911

The National Organiser
National Association of Farriers,
Blacksmiths & Agricultural
Engineers
Avenue B, 10th Street
NAC Stoneleigh
Warwicks CV8 2LG
Tel: 024 7669 6595

The Craft Secretary & Registrar
The Worshipful Company of Farriers
Sheridan House
Keinton Mandeville
Somerton
Somerset TA11 6DX
Tel: 01458 223311
email: registrar@wcf.org.uk

The Clerk
The Worshipful Company of Farriers
19 Queen Street
Chipperfield
Kings Langley
Herts. WD4 9BT
Tel: 01923 260747
email: theclerk@wcf.org.uk