

By Cheryl Johns

CUTTING COSTS... NOT CARE



We are all aware that the cost of living is increasing. This is having a chain effect on many household costs and not least the cost of owning a horse. Horse ownership can be an expensive hobby, even more so if you have multiple, or for those who compete. As current costs rise, for many this is proving hard to manage. With price rises across all industries, this means horse owners and yard owners are being hit with price hikes from all directions.

Whilst it may seem opportunist to save money in the cost of your horse care, it is important to ensure that any cost-cutting will ensure the same level of care and welfare for your equine. To continue owning their horses in an affordable way, many horse owners are making quick decisions about changing their yard, their horse's routine, or the quality of provisions which may

not always have the best long-term outcome. Recent times have seen many horse owners seeking cheaper yards or moving to those offering less inclusive livery packages. It is important to consider why some yards may be cheaper than others and ensure that any yards you consider moving to meet what would be deemed 'industry best practice' in terms of the competence and experience of the yard owner and staff, and that considerations are in place with regards to the insurance of the premises and equines, and a satisfactory level of care and welfare for the equines, as well as health and safety for all on the yard.

Yard owners are being hit with huge cost increases as well, with many forced to raise their prices to make ends meet. As a first port of call, it may be an idea to speak to your current yard owner to see if there is any way

your current package can be downgraded, or costs reduced suitably as many are changing their business models in reaction to these price rises and may have an alternative solution to a yard move. Changes to day-to-day care such as bedding, feed or forage can reduce costs, but these must be considered carefully to ensure they still meet the needs of your equines bearing in mind that often cheaper feed and forage can be of lesser quality. It is also important not to cut on important costs to routine care such as worming, farriery, vaccinations and even insurance, as these can all lead to additional problems. Whilst

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changes like these may cut costs in the short term, they could lead to costly issues further down the line.

The ideal way to save costs is to look at your current expenditure for your equine and see where costs can be realistically cut, and that will not compromise the care or welfare in the short or long term, and still provide your horse with what it really needs. If you write down all your current outgoings, you may be surprised at the areas that you can cut costs where the care and welfare of your equine won't be affected in any way.

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