

# HAS THIS INNOVATION NAILED IT?

A copper coated horseshoe nail looks set to be a major step forward towards stronger, healthier hooves. ETN reports.



Black marking and cracking of the hoof around old nail holes were visible prior to first use of the Liberty Cu Nail.

For many horse owners, and farriers, it's a constant battle. A hoof compromised by infection, brittleness, cracking and splitting is prone to lost shoes, lameness and loss of performance in addition to increased costs.

Products available to owners include topical applications that promote consistent hoof moisture content. Others that ward off and fight bacterial infections have achieved good results. Meanwhile hoof specific feed supplements have advanced considerably.

Variation in hoof wall quality naturally exists between breeds; however management and the environment in which the horse lives plays a major role. Anaerobic bacteria thrive in the warm, moist conditions found in the crevices of equine feet. Picking out hooves regularly, and maintaining fresh bedding, helps to control their proliferation.

Increased splitting and cracking

of hooves can follow seasonal fluctuations such as very wet weather follows dry periods. Topical applications, used year round, can promote a more settled hoof moisture content.

Regular farrier appointments are essential. Too long between them and feet become overgrown and shoes begin to loosen, increasing the risk of them being 'lost' and further damaging the foot.

Good farriery includes the careful selection of both shoe and nail for the horse. The shoe must be correct in terms of size and section and with the correct 'coarseness'; that is the nail hole position within the shoe.

The suitability of the nail for the foot and the shoe within which it fits cannot be overlooked. When nailing on, a farrier should nail into good quality horn where possible; while hoof wall integrity should be protected by not

overdressing the foot.

Bacteria can enter the hoof during shoeing, specifically the nailing-on of the shoe to the foot. Darkened old nail holes and cracking of the hoof around the nail line are all too familiar. However, thanks to an innovative new product from the Kerckhaert Horseshoe factory, that may be about to change.

Launched at the BEVA (British Equestrian Veterinary Association) Congress last September, the Liberty Cu [patent pending] Horseshoe Nail is the first to use an antimicrobial copper coating to inhibit and restrict the entrance and proliferation of bacteria in the hoof wall.

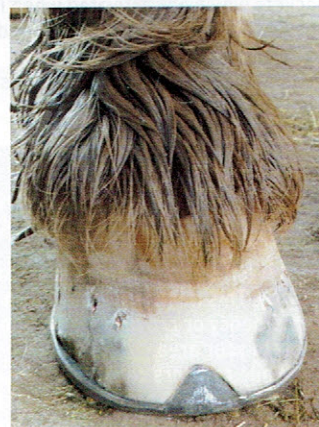
The sturdy copper coating remains on the Liberty Cu Nail throughout the shoeing period making its antimicrobial properties ongoing. The nail does not rust.

"Many horses have poor quality hoof walls, as we see from the large number of hoof specific feed supplements and topical applications that we sell," says Carl Bettison, managing director of Stromsholm, the UK distributor of the Liberty Cu Nail.

"Combined with good farriery, this nail is a huge step forward in improving the health of equine hooves."



At the second shoeing, there's a marked difference in darkening of the hoof wall and improvement in hoof health.



Monty's hooves continued to improve after a further six weeks.

## A farrier's experience

FARRIER Nigel Brown AWCFF has been using the Liberty Cu Nails on a client's horse since October.

"Despite regular shoeing appointments, Monty's feet were prone to flaking and brittleness with tainting of the hoof wall from the nails," he said.

"At the second shoeing there was a marked decrease in black marking in the walls and white line underneath, and the hoof wall appeared stronger. By the third shoeing, in mid-January, further improvement was noticed and the difference in the Liberty Cu nail holes compared to previous nails is obvious.

"Certainly a great product. I look forward to seeing these hooves progress in the coming months and using the copper nails with other clients."

Monty's owner Claire Barnes, an equine and canine manipulation and massage therapist, is delighted: "Monty's hooves look healthier and are certainly stronger than they were before. I would not go back to regular nails now."