

A conversation with...

Marie Rippingale, winner of the 2013 *OvertheCounter* Farm Vet Veterinary Nurse of the Year Award

PROFILE

Job title:	Registered Veterinary Nurse
Practice:	Scarsdale Veterinary Hospital
Size:	9 vets, 6 nurses and support staff
Date qualified:	August 2007
Customer type:	Farm and equine

BACKGROUND: Marie has always had a love of horses, and knew that she wanted to work with them. She studied BSc (Hons) Equine Sports Science at Nottingham Trent University and discovered she particularly enjoyed the anatomy and rehabilitation lectures. Marie enjoys riding in novice dressage and eventing competitions, and was lucky to be a volunteer veterinary technician at the 2012 London Olympic Games.



EDUCATION: Rose Jackson, Associate Partner at the practice, applauds Marie as "very dedicated to her job, and one of the highest qualified equine nurses in the UK". Her work ethic is clear from the list of qualifications she holds, including the Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (Equine) and an AMTRA G-SQP. "I would like to see more veterinary nurses training to be SQPs as I think the qualification can really enhance their role in practice," Marie says.

Marie is keen to help educate others: "I want to push the boundaries of equine veterinary nursing ...and see it recognised as a profession." She is a clinical coach at Bottle Green Training, teaching the first and second year components of the nursing diploma, as well as presenting talks for XLVets and the BEVA. Having had to travel some distance for her own education, she organised, wrote and taught the equine pathway component of the qualification for equine nursing students within her practice, so that they could continue their studies at home. She has also had her work published.

CHALLENGES: The financial climate is having severe consequences for horse owners, particularly leisure horses. "I worry that clients will be tempted to use cheaper treatment options rather than using vets and will not realise that this will be more expensive in the long run." Marie recommends that a free and informative call to the vet or vet nurse should be the client's first port of call. Keeping staff and clients up to date on medicines and the latest developments is also high on Marie's agenda: "We are part of the BEVA Protect Me responsible antimicrobial incentive which promotes responsible use of antibiotics and this is something I explain to our clients on a regular basis," she says. She also helps to organise CPD training events twice annually. She is Joint Head of the Equine Nurses Forum at XLVets, helping to increase awareness of the role.

ON THE OTC AWARD: "I got a massive sense of achievement out of winning my award. It is particularly nice to get some recognition for equine veterinary nursing as a profession in general, as this is an area that is commonly overlooked in veterinary practice."