



# The queens of clean

**W**HEN your horse is plastered in mud and you have the permanent aroma of muck heap, you'd be forgiven for not putting cleanliness top of your list of priorities. But for Jade Roberts, head competition groom to five-star event rider David Doel, hygiene standards are very much part of the job description.

"If I tip water out of a water bucket into a glass – would you want to drink it?" she asks.

With the welfare of top competition horses at stake, it's no wonder that Jade is so particular.

"Hygiene is extremely important – you're trying to eliminate any disease and health issues," she explains. "We try to keep the same standards at home, when travelling and at competitions. I do all the international competitions, and the

younger girls join me for the one-days at home, following the same procedures so everyone knows what they're doing."

**G**OOD hygiene is vital for equine health for three main reasons: it helps stop infections spreading from one horse to another, reduces a horse's exposure to harmful bacteria in its environment, and lowers the risk of pathogens (germs) passing between horses and the people who care for them.

Travelling horses to competitions, Jade is particularly concerned with hygiene in relation to their respiratory systems. "You don't want any coughs or snotty noses."

Abiee Oliver is yard nurse manager at Liphook Equine Hospital. Hygiene and biosecurity are top priorities for her too.

"We care for in-patients such as newborn foals and horses with weakened immune systems, alongside some

isolation cases, so it's our most important focus," she says.

The team at Liphook follow strict protocols, including removing bedding, cleaning walls, and water and feed buckets.

"We wash our hands between patients, and any time we touch a horse for a medical procedure, we wear gloves," she continues.

Jayne Tansey is one of the yard supervisors at the Philip Leverhulme Equine Hospital.

"Hygiene and biosecurity within the hospital are a large part of the yard technicians' and nurses' roles," Jayne explains. "After every inpatient is discharged, the bedding is removed, and the stable is thoroughly cleaned. Stables are only reallocated to patient use following a negative environmental swab."

And it's not only the stables that are tested for bacteria.