

A riding ambition

THREE friends from Somerset have combined their love of horses with their own individual career skills to launch a range of products which could revolutionise horse welfare.

In every sport, equipment has evolved to help talent unleash its best performance but sports involving animals – and in this case horses – have seen only stunted evolution by comparison over the decades. That is, until now.

Pro-Motion Equine spotted the anomaly and set out to not only play catch-up, but to thrust horse sport technology into the future. Starting with horse racing and using its experts in podiatry and saddlery, studying physiology of the animal in race conditions using thermography, the team designed a range of saddle orthotic pads.

The pressure-relief pads are modelled scientifically to distribute weight evenly across the horse's spine and withers. The intention was simple: relieving pressure points on the spine and scapula, spreading load, would allow greater comfort and thus improve functionality, gait and efficiency. In short, a comfortable horse can relax, can stretch further and can perform better.

Lorraine Curtin-Blair, one of three founders in Pro-Motion Equine, said: "Sounds simple, but achieving excellence on that foundation was not and many months have drawn on in reaching optimum results in the laboratory and in gait trials. The latest round of those trials has proved exceptional with chosen race-trainers now enjoying the secret opportunity and pleasing us with



Jockeys in Abu Dhabi using Pro-Motion equipment



Lorraine, Julia and Paola at Garrett Saddlers in Draycott

hugely positive feedback both here in the UK and Ireland."

Although primarily aimed at the specialist market, the pads can now be used by any horse owner as Promotion Equine has developed pads for jumping, polo, event, dressage and everyday riders.

Pro-Motion Equine is run by Lorraine, from Theale, who has a background in business and marketing, bench saddler and saddle consultant Julia Garrett, owner of Garretts saddlery in Draycott, and Paola Fletcher a podiatrist from Wellington. The team have combined their knowledge and skills and love of horses with the aim of establishing Pro-motion Equine as an recognised international brand.

The pads – designed in Draycott, manufactured in a laboratory in Devon and in Street have already attracted a big following in Europe, the Middle East, Kenya, the United States and Ireland, with the team visiting Dubai next month to promote the range.

Pro-Motion has sponsored its first jockey (flat racer John Lawson), is supporting the British Young Dressage rider Immie Jones, event riders Alexander Bragg and Jo May as well as working with Cannington College's equestrian department, and many of the UK and Ireland's top race trainers.

Julia said: "I am so proud to see our pad systems get to this stage. Clinical trials are ongoing but the results today speak for themselves; horses using our products are more comfortable, perform better and more importantly enjoy what they are doing because they are comfortable under saddle."

Paola added: "All three of us are extremely passionate about our venture. It has become a massive part of our lives and we are determined to make it a success."



Flat jockey John Lawson is sponsored by Pro-Motion

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