By Appointment to
His Majesty The King
Equine Bedding Manufacturer
Bedmax Limited Northumberland

BEDMAX

MAKING BEDDING BETTER

EQUINE HEALTH & BEDDING SURVEY 2025

The primary purpose of our latest survey, carried out in December 2024, is to check the extent and nature of equine health issues experienced by UK owners, and to compare the results with our previous similar surveys.

RESPONDENTS	HORSES OWNED OR CARED FOR
895	2,600

The key focus of our survey is to check the extent and nature of health issues, as opposed to injuries, horses are experiencing. We ask how long health problems are keeping horses off work, and whether owners are also experiencing respiratory problems in their stables.

The survey gives a clear picture of the type of beddings our respondents prefer, and the most important factors in their choice of bedding. This year for the first time we asked owners if they had changed their choice of bedding last year, and if so why. And we asked owners how they prefer to buy their bedding: online or from their local suppliers.

KEY FINDINGS

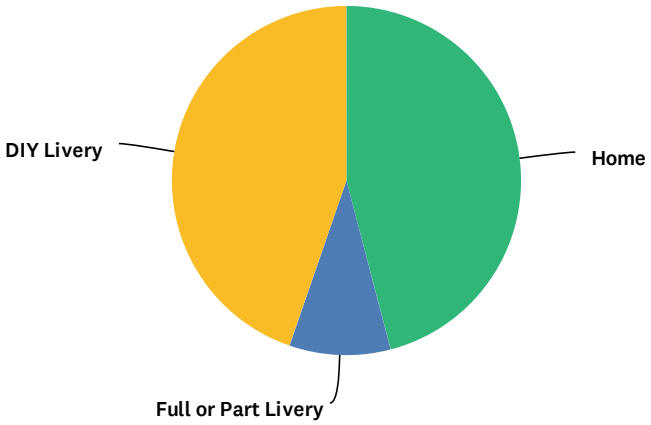
- **Over 50% of respondents experienced equine health problems**
- **Of those, 28% cited equine respiratory disease as the no.1 problem**
- **33% of respondents reported human respiratory problems**
- **Absorbency was the no.1 buying factor, just ahead of low dust**
- **35% of 553 respondents changed their bedding to save costs**
- **66% of respondents prefer to support their local retailers**

NB: Response figures have been rounded up or down to the nearest whole number

STABLING

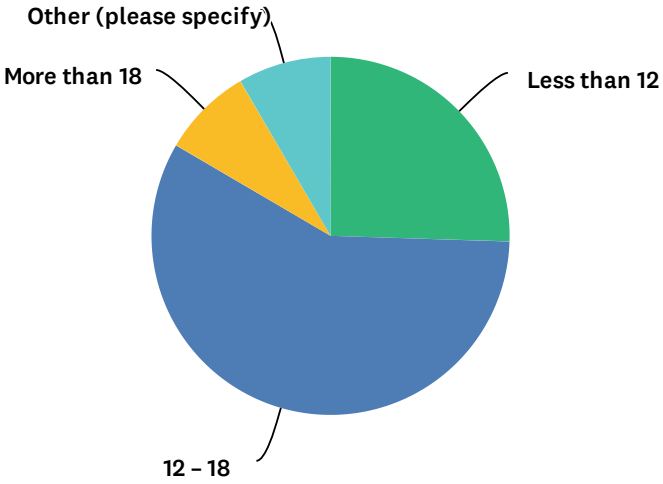
Where do you keep your horses?

	25	23	21
Home:	**46%**	**49%**	**45%**
Livery (Full/DIY):	**54%**	**51%**	**55%**



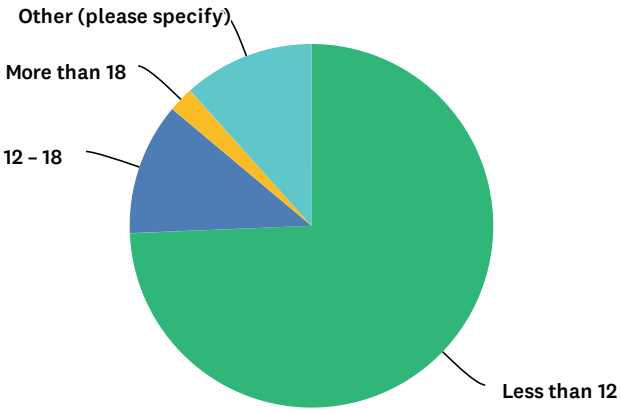
In Autumn/Winter, how many hours in each 24-hour day/ night period does your horse spend in the stable?

	25	23	21
Less than 12:	**25%**	**24%**	**20%**
12 – 18:	**58%**	**57%**	**63%**
More > 18:	**8%**	**9%**	**8%**



Stabled hours in Summer per 24 hours

Less than 12:	**74%**
12 – 18:	**12%**
More > 18:	**2%**

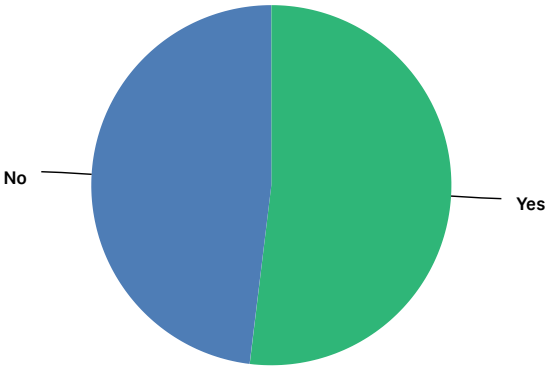


Note: NOTE: As in all our previous surveys, horses inevitably spend considerably longer in their stables during the autumn and winter than they do in spring and summer. The % of horses spending more than 12 hours out of every 24 in their stables is consistent with past surveys, as is the 8% that are stabled for more than 18 hours.

EQUINE HEALTH

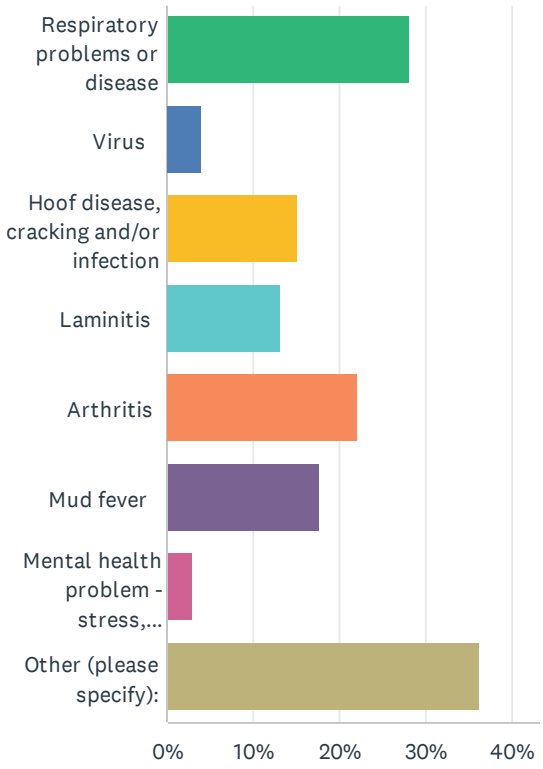
Do you own or care for a horse that has suffered a health problem that prevented riding or needed treatment?

	25	23	21
Yes:	52%	46%	45%
No:	48%	54%	55%



What were those health problems? (482)

	25	23	21
Respiratory problems or disease:	28%	33%	30%
Arthritis:	22%	20%	20%
Mud Fever:	18%	8%	13%
Hoof disease/infection:	15%	17%	11%
Laminitis:	13%	17%	21%
Skin allergy:	(5)	12%	10%
Virus:	4%	4%	4%



Other ill health answers: 36%

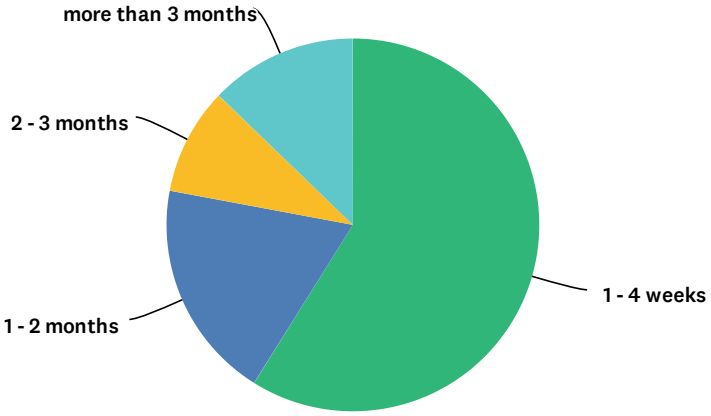
14 ulcers	**6** dental
12 colic	**6** Cushings
8 lameness	**5** sarcoids
8 allergic reaction	**5** EMS
9 abscess	Inc **13** ligament/tendon injury

Note: For the first time in 20 years, more owners/carers report health problems than not. Respiratory problems or disease remain the single most common equine health problem in every survey we have undertaken. This year for the first time, Arthritis has replaced Hoof disease/infection as the second most common problem. But stabled horses with any of the 7 most widespread conditions benefit significantly from the use of high quality, low dust, purpose-made hygienic bedding.

EQUINE HEALTH

How long did the health problem keep your horse off work/on box rest? (399)

	25	23	21
1-4 weeks:	58%	64%	42%
1-2 months:	19%	18%	26%
2-3 months:	9%	6%	15%
More than 3 mths:	13%	13%	18%

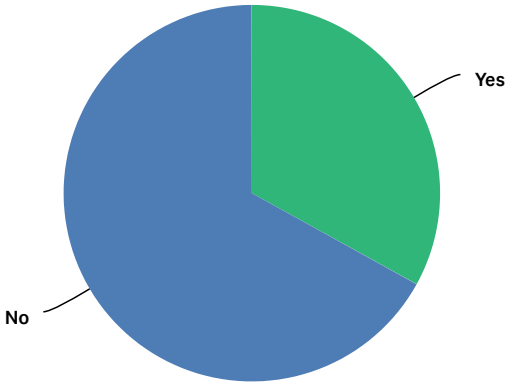


NEW

HUMAN HEALTH

Do you suffer from any respiratory problems such as asthma that make it important for you to buy dust extracted bedding? (884)

Yes:	33%
No:	67%



Note: While health problems keep the majority of horses off work or under treatment for less than 1 month, 113 horses were affected for up to 3 months, and 51 more were off for longer.

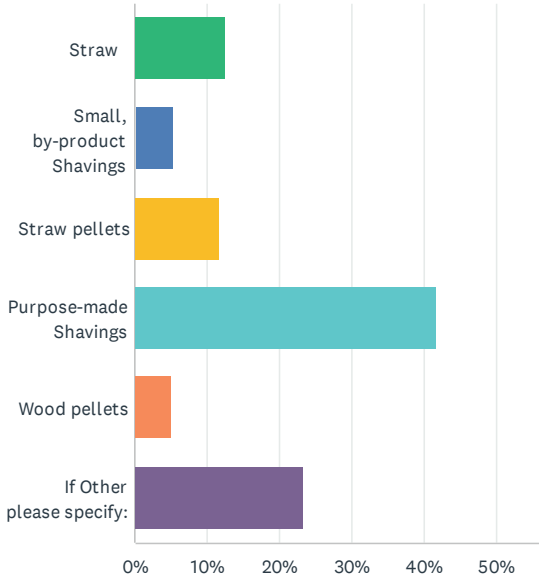
For the first time we asked owners if they themselves had respiratory problems that made it difficult or impossible to work with dusty bedding. A very significant 1 in 3 reported that a low dust bedding was as critical to their own health as to their horses'.

BEDDING CHOICES

What type of bedding do you currently use? (852)

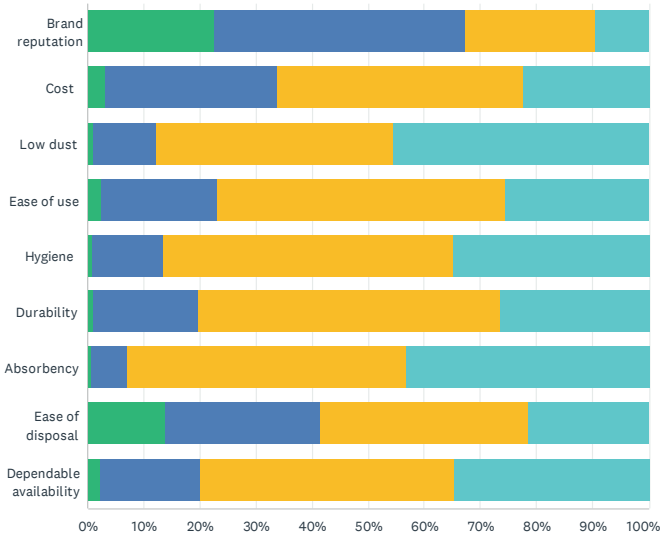
	25	23	21
Purpose-made shavings:	42%	53%	48%
Straw:	13%	9%	10%
Straw pellets:	12%	8%	4%
Small by-product shavings:	5.5%	6%	9%
Wood pellets:	5%	3%	8%

Other: 23% (199) most answers	
Mixed/layers shavings/straw/pellets:	42
Chopped straw (various):	28
Different types for different horses:	21



What are your most important factors when choosing bedding for your horse? (852)

Priority order	25	23	21
Absorbency:	1	2	2
Low dust:	2	1	1
Hygiene:	3	3	3
Dependable supply:	4	4	5
Ease of use:	5	5	4
Cost:	6	6	6
Ease of disposal:	7	7	7
Brand reputation:	8	8	8



Note: The choice of bedding type continues to show a preference for purpose-made shavings (356), but the 12% (100) choosing straw pellets is a significant increase on our previous survey results.

In the Other responses, 42 answers cited using a mix or layers of different bedding, many with shavings or straw on top of straw or wood pellets.

For the first time Absorbency appears at the top of the list of buyers' preferences, narrowly replacing Low Dust as the priority in all our previous surveys. All other factors remain in the same order of priority.

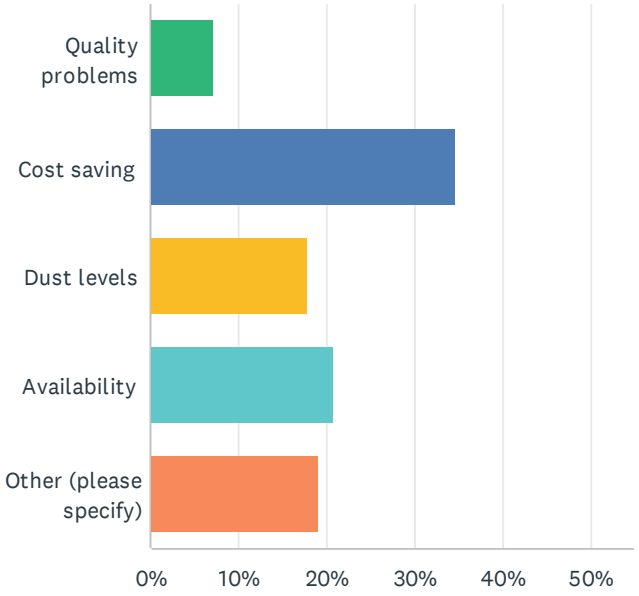
NEW

If you have changed your choice of bedding over the past 12 months please tell us the main reason? (553)

Cost saving:	**35%**
Availability:	**21%**
Dust levels:	**18%**
Quality problems:	**7%**

Other: 19% (106) most answers:

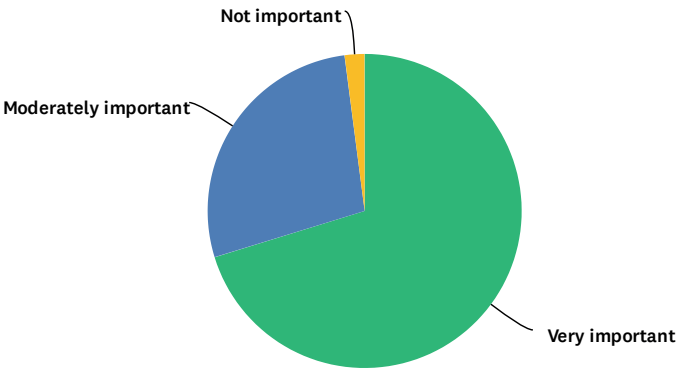
No change:	**32**
Absorbency:	**14**



NEW

We make our Bedmax shavings predominantly from Scots Pine, which has unique, natural antibacterial properties that kill harmful bacteria in the stable. Can you tell us how important you think this is as a factor in your choice of bedding? (884)

Very important:	**70%**
Moderately:	**28%**
Not important:	**2%**



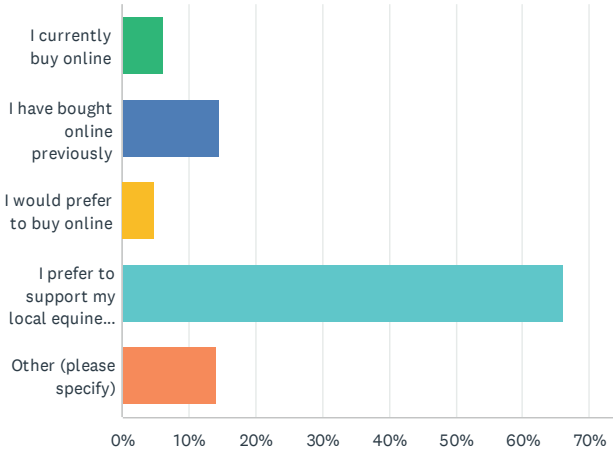
Note: In contrast to the priorities in choosing bedding, of the 553 respondents who reported changing their bedding over the past year, 35% cited cost saving as their main reason.

Our use of Scots Pine to make our Bedmax, Littlemax and Stockmax shavings is a unique benefit that may not be widely understood. The fact that 70% of the 884 respondents to this question regard this benefit as very important may contribute to the ranking of Hygiene as the 2nd most important factor when owners are choosing the best bedding.

NEW
BUYING BEDDING

Have you ever bought bedding online? (852)

Currently buy online:	**6%**
Bought online previously:	**15%**
Prefer to buy online:	**5%**
Prefer to support retailers:	**66%**



Other 14% (120) Most answers

No/never:	**46**
Buy direct/bulk/from yard:	**23**
Buy from farmer:	**8**

If you currently buy bedding online, could you tell us what type and brand it is? (106)

Type:

Wood pellets/chip:	**30**	Shavings	**22**
Straw pellets:	**14**	Chopped straw	**5**

Brand:

Bedmax	**9**	Blue Ribbon	**4**	Aubiose	**1**
Concord	**5**	Aquamax	**3**	Rolling Hills	**1**
Snowflake	**5**	White Horse	**3**	Eventus	**1**
Unibed	**5**	Allspan	**2**	Raviera	**1**
Strawmax	**4**	Firepower	**2**	Sorbeo	**1**
Blue Frog	**4**	Agripellets	**2**		

Note: As the growth of online sales continues in all markets, it is encouraging for Bedmax and for equestrian retailers that the overwhelming majority of respondents to this question prefer to continue to support their local suppliers.

Bedmax has always distributed our bedding and other products through a national network of wholesalers and retailers. The Survey results indicate that this is the route a majority of our end-users would prefer us to continue to take in the future.