Meet Amy Honey, Redwings Horse Sanctuary's Weight Management Coordinator!

Published July 11, 2022

Amy has been at the forefront of our joint campaign with Redwings, 'Battle the Bulge,' since January, and she's making amazing progress.

Amy's Progress:

"I started this new exciting role in January, and I am really enjoying it. I am finding it very interesting, seeing how the horses and ponies are doing on their weight loss journeys. We have put groups on the same diet and yet the results have been different between them. Some have had better results than others, but they are all getting there!

I am learning every day and researching when I can in this new role. I am kept very busy over the six Norfolk sites, weighing and body condition scoring and speaking to our in-house vets, managers, team leaders of individual sites on the grazing and how we can help our larger horses and ponies become healthier through their management.

It is very important for all to not be at the higher end of the body condition score scale as it can cause major health problems such as Laminitis, EMS, and joint-related issues.

I am trying to encourage all centres to be mindful when it comes to adjusting the strip grazing fence line. Look at the grass, which is growing up behind them, does it really need moving? Is there enough there to last a few more days? Do they need as much as they would normally have? We don’t want the ponies to eat the grass down too short at the risk of picking up sand but equally, if the grass is growing well as it has been this year, do they need the extra?

I am trying a couple of different methods of grazing this summer across a couple of Redwings sites with my target groups. We have a track system on one of our cob groups and once they have finished strip grazing round the edge, we are going to shut off one corner so they have to walk round the field to reach their water tank, this should encourage

them to move around more. On one of our smaller sites, some fences are being moved daily so these groups are getting little but often. We are only moving them between ¼ and ½ a post a day, depending on the size of the group, size of equines, and size of field.

In other groups, we are moving fences twice a week usually on a Monday and Thursday. After a month or so we can see if any of these grazing methods work better than the others for our larger ponies and also make sure they are not losing too much weight too quickly. We generally weigh our horses once a month and we have others that are being monitored more frequently which we are weighing every two weeks and then liaising with vets. There are two centres which are weighed every other month, but I try and get round the largest centres to walk round and check on target groups and catch up with the centre manager to see how things are going. In between going to the different centres I enter data onto our computer system and work out percentages lost or gained per horse and work out feeding and forage.

This role is a big task, but very enjoyable, which I'm very proud to have been asked to take on. I get a lot of support from my managers, vets, and all staff from all the Norfolk sites. Huge thanks to the Spillers Slimmers' club for all their kind support too!"

Join us and Amy in our mission to #BattleTheBulge and ensure our beloved equines lead healthier, happier lives.

For more tips and advice on managing your horse's weight, visit SPILLERS and Redwings Horse Sanctuary.

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