

## Man's Best Friend

Dogs have often been referred to as 'man's best friend' and they are a common sight around many stable yards. A dog can provide additional security and an early warning sign of the arrival of visitors - both expected and unexpected - and becoming accustomed to other animals, including dogs, is an important part of a young horse's training. However, dogs can also be a hazard if not kept under control, so here are a few tips on how to make sure your dog is an asset and not a liability.

Always keep your dog under control and on a lead if necessary. An obedient dog is more rewarding than an unruly one so make sure they will come when you call them. Puppies will inevitably chew things so keep rugs, grooming kit, bandages and tack out of reach. Before visiting a yard for the first time phone and check whether they allow dogs. If not, leave your dog at home as you should never leave your dog unattended in the car.

Do not allow your dog to chase or bark at horses, either in a field or in the stable yard. Dogs that spend significant time at a yard may see it as their 'territory' and will defend it against other dogs so be aware of this and take care when introducing any new dogs.

Make sure that visitors are aware that there will be dogs around by placing signs on the approach to the yard. Introduce new horses into the yard to the dog/s and allow them to become accustomed to having them around. Dogs can be badly injured by a kick from a horse so keep dogs away from a horse's heels.

If you take your dog with you out hacking, make sure that you can keep them under control and they will not upset your horse or create a hazard to traffic. Take care not to shut a dog in a stable with a horse as the horse may take exception to an 'intruder' in his box.

Make sure any dogs on the yard have access to water, shade and somewhere to lie down. If you have a dog or dogs in the yard pay particular attention when moving vehicles in case they are nearby or underneath.

Finally, don't forget that an unruly dog can be a danger to itself and to others so make sure you put as much effort into training your dog as you do your horse.

