

### **3 Common Types of Bedding**

#### **Straw**

Straw is one of the most commonly used bedding for horses, and has been since horses were first domesticated. It is readily available and affordable

Straw is still the cheapest option in many parts of the country but it is bulky to store and time consuming to muck out. Some horses are prone to eating it, so it is essential that it is clean and dust free.

Straw is made from the stems of wheat, barley, oat or rye crops. Oat straw is more absorbent than the other types. You should watch out for the occasional bad bale of straw, which may smell mouldy or off and/or be difficult to separate. If this happens, discard it because there may be fungus in the straw which could be dangerous to horses.



#### **Wood shavings**

Wood shavings are probably the most widely used bedding now, usually pine. They are compact and easy to store but they vary a lot in quality. Look for one which is thoroughly dust extracted as some owners find that they can cause breathing allergies. In this case they can be bought as pellets which are really clean and dust free.

Wood shavings are more absorbent, so more of the urine and ammonia is absorbed, which reduces the bad odour and the risk of damage to the horse's lungs.

Since the urine is absorbed by a smaller amount of shavings, a smaller amount of soiled shavings needs to be discarded compared to straw, which can make for an overall saving. A thin layer of shavings is more comfortable than the same amount of straw, but shavings are not much more comfortable than thick straw.



#### **Rubber Stable Mats**

Stable mats are not normally standalone bedding option, but they *will* reduce the amount of bedding used. They help line the stable floor, giving your horse a better surface to stand or lie down, while also providing shock absorption, insulation and traction. By using stable mats properly, you will save money on bedding and time spent on cleaning. You may also easily sterilize a mat should this be necessary if an unhealthy horse has been quarantined, which is not so easy if you're using a surface such as dirt or cement.

