

## Ask the vet: dentistry special



### **I have a 25-year-old gelding who struggles to eat hay in the winter, what can I do?**

It is very important that our older horses and ponies have regular dental examinations, usually every 6 months. Older horses teeth can change very quickly and this can result in difficulty eating. Occasionally horses have loose teeth which can be removed and the horse then manages to eat hay again, however, many older horses have gaps between their teeth which need regular management by your vet/dentist. Additionally, dietary alterations can help for example maximising turnout where possible or feeding hay replacers instead of long hay.

### **My dentist has noticed that my horse has a lot of tooth decay, what can I do to help?**

Some horses are more prone to tooth decay than others but it is certainly a condition we want to manage to prevent problems further down the line. One thing that can help reduce the decay is feeding less sugar. This includes apples and any treats that contain molasses or large amounts of sugar additives. If you are looking for a treat alternative, fibre cubes work very well! You can also help your horses decay but rinsing out their mouth of any sugary feed every day. Using a dental syringe works well but if you don't have one of these, a hosepipe will do the job!

### **I have recently bought an 8-year-old horse and he has wolf teeth, what should I do?**

Wolf teeth are very common, especially in geldings and rarely cause a problem! As long as the wolf teeth are in the correct location and are erupted from the gum they shouldn't cause trouble. If your horse begins to show resentment to the bit it would be worth arranging an examination with us and we can discuss treatment options.