How can I ensure my horse’s hooves grow strong healthy horn?
The quality and strength of the horn will have a major impact on the health of the hoof. As horse's hooves are continually growing, good nutrition is essential to provide all the building blocks necessary for this growth. The diet should contain high levels of good quality biotin, which has been shown to improve poor quality hooves and increase growth rates. Other key requirements are less well known and not available in all supplements. These include vitamins, specific amino acids and MSM, a source of sulphur, essential for strength.

Nettex V.I.P.® HOOF BUILDER provides the full micronutrient package for strong, healthy hooves, including 50mg Biotin per feed, with no added sugar and a highly palatable formula. Hooves grow slowly so supplementation should be considered long term. With V.I.P.® HOOF BUILDER you should expect to see results after 3 months.

Many horse owners often stop feeding a Biotin supplement when the hoof quality improves, this may then cause the hooves to revert back to original condition. It is recommended to continue to feed a biotin supplement to maintain healthy hoof condition. Nettex also offer a standard maintenance formulation Biotin Everyday which offers 15mg Biotin per feed.

What is thrush, and what is the best way to prevent it?
Thrush is a very common problem, especially in winter, but can occur all year round. It is an infection caused by the bacterium Fusobacterium necrophorum. It thrives in damp, low oxygen situations which is why we see it typically around the sulcus and clefts of the frog, although the whole sole can be affected. It can quickly take hold when standing in damp or dirty situations so can be seen in horses living out or stabled. Thorough and regular picking out followed by washing if needed and drying should be part of the horse’s daily foot care routine. Once clean and dry, Stockholm Tar was traditionally used as a barrier to dirt and moisture.

Nettex Hoof Tar is a traditional antibacterial disinfectant in an easy-to-use aerosol spray. It is a simpler, more effective version of Stockholm Tar, with less mess and less waste. Nettex Hoof Tar produces a barrier to help support the sole and frog during wet conditions.
**Why is the frog so important and how can I keep it healthy?**

The frog plays a fundamental role in the normal locomotion of the horse. It acts as the “shock absorber” when the foot comes down, protecting bones and joints from concussion. It also assists the flow of blood around the foot when exercising. To stay healthy and to do its job it needs to have good, even contact with the ground. Regular professional trimming of the hoof is critical to ensure it is correctly shaped and the foot balanced to enable this. Even with correct trimming, the frog is prone to infections such as thrush and other bacterial problems.

Nettex Frog Health contains powerful antibacterial and antiseptic agents that help support hoof hygiene and help dry mucky, smelly frogs. It is ideal to be used regularly as part of your hoof hygiene regime to help maintain a healthy frog all year round.

**What should I do if the see the hoof is damaged?**

As the hoof is so important in keeping a horse sound, any damage to the foot should be assessed very carefully. The sole can easily be damaged by sharp objects such as flints and nails, and the potential severity can vary considerably. The sole protects the vital and sensitive regions in the foot, including several bones and joints. Penetrations can damage these structures or introduce infections that can be difficult to treat and even life threatening. It is best to treat any penetrations of the sole or frog as an emergency and discuss with your vet without delay. After appropriate vet advice, Nettex Hoof Puncture Plus contains powerful antibacterial and antiseptic agents to clean and sanitise minor puncture wounds in the feet.

Cracks in the wall can be common, caused by knocks or loose shoes, or sometimes due to the conformation of the foot. Your farrier can give good advice and help in these situations.

Healthy strong hooves are more resilient to trauma. Nettex Biotin Everyday can be fed all year round to maintain strong and healthy hooves.

**How can I best show off my horse’s hooves when competing?**

Healthy, well cared for hooves are the starting point to looking good but there are many products available that aim to improve the appearance and shine when out and about or in the competition ring. It’s important to know the rules and customs of your particular discipline as some products might be frowned upon, for example in the show ring, particularly if they have an effect on hoof colour. It’s also important that the product doesn’t cause the hoof to dry or become brittle. That is why it’s best to choose a product that is alcohol-free that allows hooves to continue to absorb moisture.

Nettex Traditional Hoof Oil is an alcohol-free formulation that can be used all year round to nourish and protect the hooves while giving a long-lasting high shine. For that last minute touch up before going into the ring, Nettex Quick Gloss Hoof Spray is easy to apply and the is the ideal product to keep in your show kit for those special occasions.