

**Customer name:** Mr Raby  
**Location:** Foots Farm Riding Centre,  
Clacton-on-Sea, Essex  
**Arena size:** 17 x 32m  
**Contractor:** Self build  
**Main usage/profession:**  
Riding school/livery/ RDA

**Customer name:** Becky Chapman  
**Location:** Ashen Equestrian Centre,  
Haverhill, Essex  
**Arena size:** 60 x 20m  
**Contractor:** Self build/ Equestrian Direct  
**Main usage/profession:**  
Training/clinics/hire



Foots Farm Riding Centre is a busy equestrian centre performing many functions. From livery to teaching, RDA to general schooling, Foots Farm is truly a multi-purpose busy centre. Recently they were fortunate to receive a grant to erect a new building and create an indoor riding school with a sand surface.

Due to the type of sand used the school became very dusty. "The dust used to be so bad that during a days teaching children on ponies, my face would become black and the whole arena became a cloud of dust, says yard manager and Head RDA instructor Donna Smith. "Since we installed hydrogel, the airborne and surface dust has been kept to an absolute minimum and the mum's of the children having their lessons, can now wear make-up rather than dirty black face masks, not to mention the coughing from horses and their riders has stopped", adds Donna.

The hydrogel was easily installed by accurately applying the relevant amount per square metre, then simply harrowing through the top surface. This was then watered to activate the gel. "Although I still water the surface, says Donna, I would guess that I watered the surface four times as much before the hydrogel was installed. The hydrogel has saved me much time and effort in maintaining the arena as the surface stays hydrated for longer and therefore reduces the movement of the riding surface."

Apart from the appearance and maintenance, there has been another benefit. "The surface has become so much nicer to ride on. There is much more elasticity in the surface, which is nicer when leading ponies around the arena on foot, and jumping my own horses. It really gives the horses and riders much more confidence."

Ashen Equestrian Centre, based near Haverhill on the Suffolk/ Essex border is owned and managed by Becky Chapman. Becky's qualifications include RWYM senior coach, ABRSTC, BHS.int'T and a diploma in Advanced Sports Psychology. The centre is a forward thinking equestrian facility and hosts a whole range of activities from dressage training, kids camps, barehoof clinics, horse psychology and physiotherapy, training workshops and hire of the arena.

Becky decided to choose the turffloat with hydrogel surface because she needed a high performing surface, suitable for all riding disciplines and activities, but with minimal maintenance. The turffloat fibres were added by equestriandirect to the EQ8a equisilica sand.

"Although the sand by itself can be a very nice surface it is very susceptible to the weather conditions. It can ride very dead when wet, then very loose and deep when dry, says Becky. The turffloat fibres have worked into the sand to stabilise the surface, which never rides deep and gives good cushioning even when wet. Depending on how I level the arena I can also change how the surface rides which is so useful to me given the varied use that I have for the arena".

Becky also decided on adding hydrogel to the surface with the turffloat. Becky has been delighted with the way that hydrogel has worked. "With the level of use the arena receives, we would normally have to water the surface to assist with the performance, however, the hydrogel has kept the surface moist at all times giving me the performance of a considerably more expensive surface with none of the draw backs."

## COME FOR A TEST-RIDE!

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Hydrogel is harmless for human health and the environment. Nevertheless, we ask you to follow these safety notices:  
- Don't eat, drink or inhale  
- If contact with mucous membranes (eyes, nose, mouth) rinse thoroughly with clean water  
- Keep sample away from children

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