

# Comfort & Need

## Cashel makes a difference in the lives of horses and humans

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY CASHEL COMPANY

For many horses, sore backs, flies and uncomfortable tack are a big problem. For riders, aching knees and backsides can make riding that was once a joy become a chore. But what if things didn't have to be that way? When a group of experienced horse people asked that question, the Cashel company was formed to create an answer.

A small Northwest company founded in 1986, Cashel began its unique line of products by looking at comfort from the horse's perspective. Therapeutic saddle pads for dressage, jumping, showing and racing were Cashel's first mark on the scene and quickly became trusted industry favorites. But performance horses weren't the only ones in need, and the people of Cashel were full of ideas.

A trail rider from his youth, Tony Lang moved to Chehalis, Washington four years ago to take on the position of general manager for Cashel Company. Keeping the focus on products and innovations that had the everyday rider in mind, Cashel maintained a steady growth of new products without letting go of the standards that customers had come to expect: creativity, usefulness and affordability.

### Beyond the Back

But riding-related comfort wasn't the only focus. Those nuisance flies that plague horses all across the country were about to become less trouble...

Working with a patented design from a local Lewis County woman, Cashel produced the first Crusader Fly Mask in the early '90s. The mask offers both insect and sun protection and is made of material so soft and breathable that customers often claim they would be willing to wear one themselves.

Comfort for the horse remained a priority, but Cashel's next move was to improve life for the rider.

"For us grey-hairs, for the AARP group, comfort's pretty important," says Lang. "Seems like there are a lot of people just like me."

### Idea People

That "people like me" focus guides every step as Cashel strives to create quality products that are affordable, solve a problem, and make a difference. To this end, when an idea is presented, the Cashel team sits down and discusses how best to design and construct the item for durability, effectiveness and reasonable cost.

Product ideas come from everywhere—the staff, the community, amateurs and professionals alike. In turn, these are the people who test them. Prototypes of each product are sent out to industry professionals, family members and friends for extensive testing that takes place all across the continent.

"With the variable environment around here, the high humidity—let's face it, it rains—we have good extremes to put them to the test," says Lang. Other tests take place in the desert heat of Arizona among roping competitors, or just about anywhere horse people can be found.

"When you get entrenched with the people that use [the product], when you use it yourself, it's amazing how much it improves the experience. We have a great staff...they're idea people," says Lang. "When people ask 'Where did you get that?' I enjoy being able to say 'We made that.'"

For everyone involved, it's all about comfort, innovation, and filling a need, but products aren't the only way Cashel fills needs. Reaching out into the community, near and far, means a lot to this Northwest company.

### Cashel Cares

After a family medical scare, Lang had breast cancer on his mind. So when his daughter asked if he'd make a pink fly mask for her, he saw an opportunity. "I combined her like and my fear," he says. The result was a pink Crusader mask that offers a portion of all sales to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

Also benefiting from the company's firm belief in "sharing is caring" were the victims of last year's Southwest Washington floods. Seeing the needs all around their Chehalis headquarters, including some employees whose farms were destroyed, Cashel donated products to a silent auction held to raise hay and feed money for flood victims.

All of this is just another day's labor of love for one of the Northwest's most innovative equine product companies. Finding and filling needs is a mission Cashel continues to embrace, for horses and humans alike.

NWHS

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