



Equine Dentist: Martin Lopez

Most people do not realize that horses need dentists too! Why? Because a horse's teeth will continue to grow for its entire life. Each year the horse's teeth should be checked, and if needed, "floated" or filed. This will eliminate any sharp edges caused from uneven wear of the teeth that can cause discomfort and pain for the horse. Having the teeth floated also help keep the correct alignment for the ideal chewing.

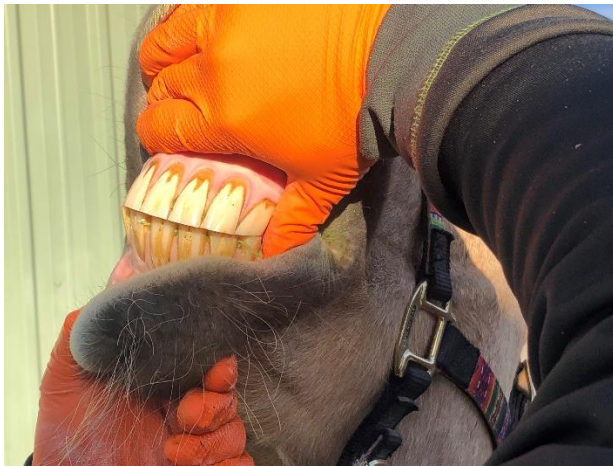
We caught up with Equine Dentist, Martin Lopez to find out more about this fascinating career!

Did you always want to be an equine dentist? Honestly, I did not know that was even a thing when I was in high school! I wanted to go to school to become a vet. But life happened and I needed to get to work earning money. I always had a passion for horses. I realized that there was a shortage and a need for equine dentists so that is the direction I went.

Do you have to go to dentistry school? Sort of! I have gone through several school programs to earn Certifications. In these programs I learned the anatomy and physiology of the horse. You can really cause a lot of problems with a horse if you don't know what you are doing. I also had a 2 ½ year apprenticeship with an experienced dentist so I could continue to learn on a variety of horses through many experiences.

How many horses do you treat in a year? Lopez can treat 1,500 horses a year. The day we met up with him he had 14 horses on the schedule. Keep in mind, each horse takes about 30-45 minutes and that does not include the travel time between houses/barns/farms. Equine dentists must be prepared for some long days! Although Lopez can balance that in the summer when the days need to be shorter because of the extreme heat. A summer day might look more like 5am-11am. This is not only to prevent Lopez from working in the extreme heat, but also for the health and stress of the horse.

Salary Range: According to CareerTrend.com the average salary for an equine dentist is \$69,000-\$76,000. However, this can vary greatly depending on how full a schedule is kept. On average an Equine Dentist will charge \$125-\$200 per horse.



Look at those pretty teeth!



Filing the front teeth for a perfect bite!



The back teeth have to be filed to allow for proper chewing and digestion of food.



Checking for sharp edges in the back that could hurt the horse.