



RUBBER LOOSEBOX MATS

**They reduce the amount
of bedding required and
save costs**



Against the background of rising costs for bedding materials and general delays in the procurement of good quality bedding, many horse owners are looking for bedding alternatives. However, they come at a price, and it thus makes sense not only to look for alternative materials but also for ways to reduce the amount of bedding required. Moreover, in addition to the cost of bedding, various other aspects, such as labor costs or the cost of manure disposal, also need to be taken into account when considering the overall cost of loosebox maintenance. As such, the entire system should be considered. One possible solution is to combine high-quality rubber mats with a reduced amount of bedding as an efficient and cost-effective alternative.

Reduce costs and workload with rubber mats

A high-quality **BELMONDO® loosebox mat in combination with reduced bedding helps to significantly reduce the overall costs for species-appropriate stable flooring.** The rubber mats ensure a comfortable, dry and slip-resistant lying area, thereby replacing a decent amount of the bedding. An independent study carried out by the Department of Equine Management at Nuertingen-Geislingen University in 2013 confirmed that significantly less bedding is required when using rubber mats: **More than a quarter of the bedding can be saved a year in each loosebox.** The study involved comparing looseboxes without mats and the usual alternating bedding method (with 8-10 cm of shavings) with looseboxes equipped with rubber mats and a reduced amount of bedding (ca. 1 cm of shavings). At a price of €7.50 for 20 kg of shavings, this resulted in annual savings of up to €300 per loosebox. Seeing as prices have risen in the meantime, **the overall cost reduction is probably even greater now.** The individual savings potential depends on the quality of management, the type of bedding used and the actual horse.

Costs per year (in euros)

	Alternating bedding method on concrete	Rubber mat and reduced bedding
Depreciation of rubber mat (10 years)	-	72
Interest rate of rubber mat (5 %)	-	18
Labor costs (€15/h)	645	484
Bedding material (shavings: €7.50/20 kg)	773	540
Sum	1,418	1,114

Savings on bedding with rubber mat:

622 kg / less per loosebox and year

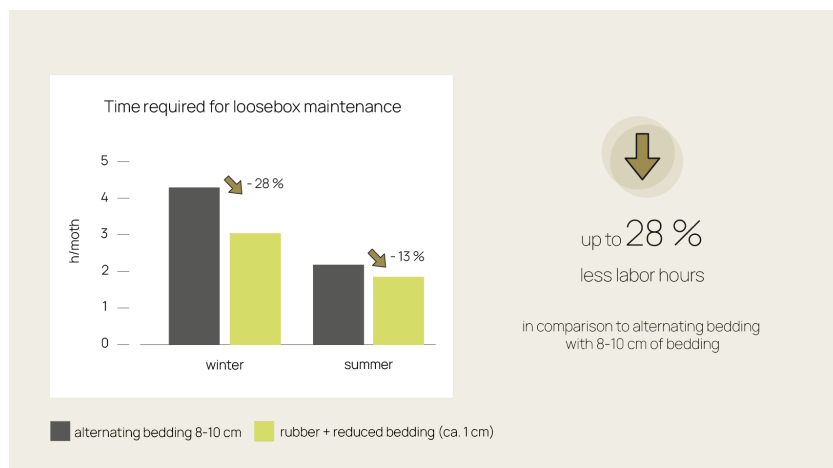
= 25 % less bedding

= cost benefit of ca. €300 / per loosebox and year!

The greatest savings are achieved by reducing the amount of conventional bedding, as the **rubber mats** already provide the most essential functions such as **softness, thermal insulation and slip resistance**. With this system, the bedding is only needed to absorb the urine of the animals and other moisture. Quality remains the same throughout the year, and price or quality fluctuations, for example due to poor straw yields, are less pronounced. The bedding used should offer good absorbency. (Find more information on how to choose the “right bedding” in this guidance article: Which bedding is best for horses?)

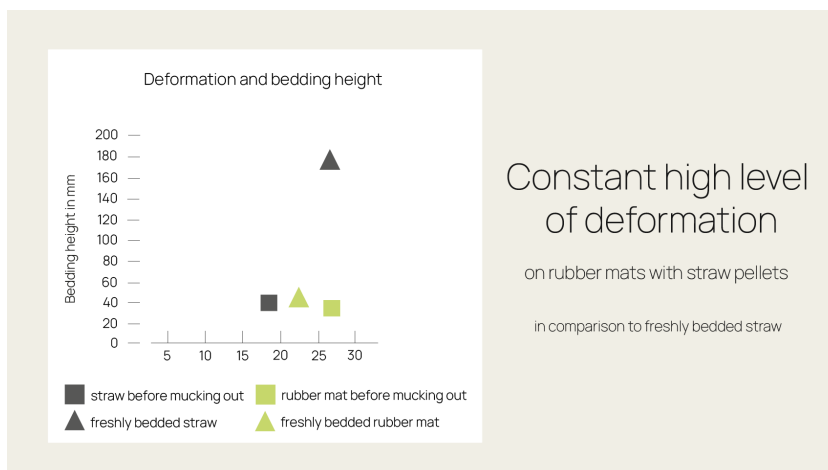
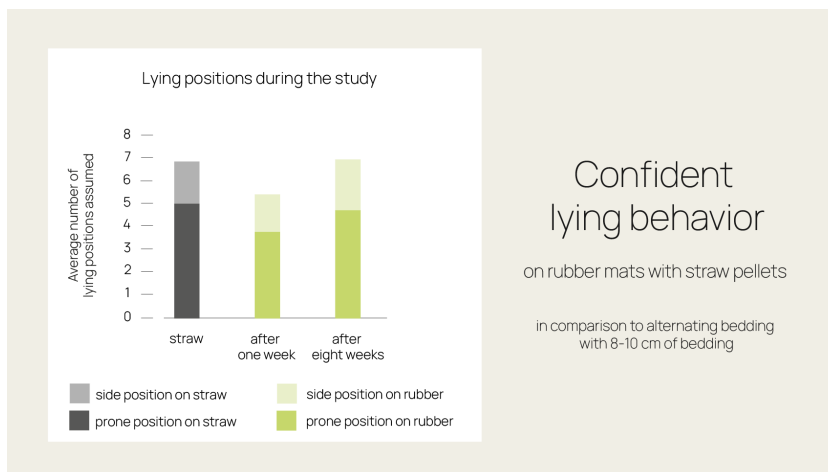
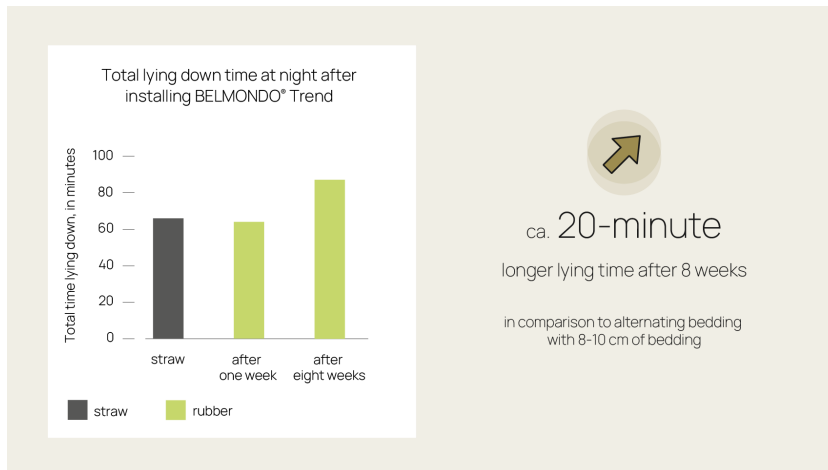
However, the overall business analysis includes not only material but also labor costs. The rubber mat system with reduced bedding also has a positive effect here, as it makes loosebox maintenance easier, thereby reducing both workload and costs.

In the study carried out by Nürtingen-Geislingen University, **the workload** required for loosebox maintenance **was reduced by more than a quarter** – leaving significantly more time to look after the horse.



Effects on the lying behavior of horses

Horses often react sensitively to new ground, as another study carried out by Nürtingen-Geislingen University showed. However, shortly after the installation of BELMONDO® rubber mats in the stable, animals return to their usual lying positions and demonstrate relaxed behavior. **Interestingly, it can be observed that after just a few weeks the horses tend to lie even longer on the rubber mats – combined with straw pellets – than on straw beds.**



After just a few weeks, horses even lie longer on the rubber mats with straw pellets than on straw beds and demonstrate confident lying behavior.

Rubber mats in combination with straw pellets offer a constant high level of deformation.

Further positive effects

Compared to conventional bedding, the **combined floor system** not only **reduces** the amount of bedding required but also the **amount of manure produced** – and, therefore, also the **cost of manure disposal**. Positive side effect: Flies tend not to breed in such a loose, dry layer of bedding compared to a conventional thick mattress.

Besides the cost and time savings, **rubber mats also have a positive effect on hygiene and the stable climate**, as **less dust and manure** are produced. The reduced amount of bedding makes it **easier to completely remove wet bedding every day**. This is essential to **minimize ammonia emissions**.

Seeing as the rubber mat system with reduced bedding is drier overall, it even leads to a demonstrably **lower bacterial load**¹⁾ compared to a conventional straw loosebox and can also help prevent mold growth.

Furthermore, **BELMONDO® rubber mats** have a positive effect on the health and well-being of horses: They **improve comfort**, as they offer adequate shock absorption and thus help to protect tendons and joints.

In addition, the rubber mats have an **insulating effect** that protects horses from cold from below, resulting in fewer muscle disorders and stiffness.



Summary: How BELMONDO® rubber mats combine cost efficiency and comfort

BELMONDO® rubber mats are an optimal solution for horse husbandry, combining economic benefits with increased animal comfort. By reducing the amount of bedding and the associated material and maintenance costs, they make a significant contribution to minimizing costs for owners. At the same time, they promote the well-being of horses and ensure a constant, pleasant environment for the animals – with constant good quality all year round.

Source:

1) Prof. Dr. B. Benz et al. (2013): Weniger Einstreu bei gleichem Komfort. In: Pferde Zucht & Haltung 1/2013, S. 66ff