

# BARNMANAGER

## Changing The Way Wellington's Barns Are Run

By Emily Riden

*Nicole Lakin was a working student for Max Amaya and his Stonehenge Stables when, one winter in Wellington, she realized something was missing — something that would make her job and the jobs of hundreds of other Wellington barn managers and staff members far simpler.*

Up until that point, there was no exemplary organizational tool for barn managers, nothing to help them communicate with their team, no real centralized system where they could house horses' records, notes, to-do lists and charts, and access them from anywhere.

So Lakin, who has been spending winters in Wellington since 2006, started creating Microsoft Excel and Word forms and documents to improve her own barn organization, and she posed a question to several other barn managers.

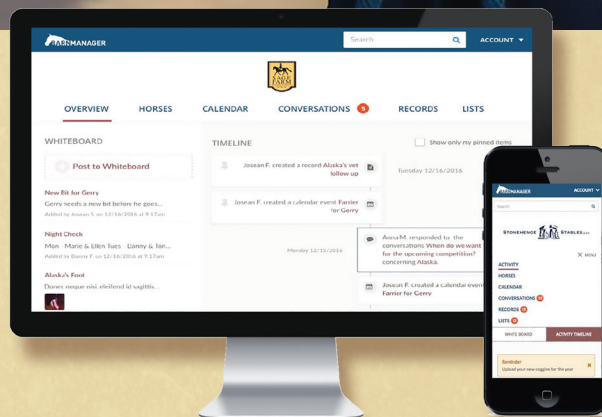
"I was always looking for ways to get around communication issues and to be more organized. Once I started playing around with it, I realized that there was really a need for something more," said Lakin, a graduate of New York University and the Babson F.W. Olin Graduate School of Business.

"I was very lucky that I made some amazing friends who had been managers working with horses and managing complex organizations far longer than I had. I sat them all down one night at Tub Tim Thai in Wellington, and I went around the table and asked them what the most annoying thing was that they were constantly having trouble with," Lakin explained. "Once we had a little



Nicole Lakin, pictured with her horse Wannabe and dog Monkey, founded BarnManager after recognizing a need within the Wellington equestrian community and beyond.

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The cloud-based software, which features horse health recording, calendars, to-do lists, accounting and more, is changing the way barn managers are able to operate.

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bit of a venting session about all of the things that could be better, I said, ‘If I built something to make those things better, would you guys use it?’ They all looked at me, and said, ‘Yes, of course!’”

From that conversation over Thai food, the now industry-leading, cloud-based software BarnManager was born.

Lakin devoted much of the next year to carefully mapping out the features of the application — including calendars, record storage, list-making tools, a virtual “whiteboard” and more — and working with others on the design and build of the new program, before rolling it out to the equestrian community.

“I think launching it was definitely one of the more exciting experiences of my life,” Lakin said. “It was really rewarding to actually see people using it, responding, giving us feedback. I say it took a solid year for it to really start picking up, but once it did, it took off pretty quickly. It’s always exciting when you get an e-mail saying, ‘Someone, who happens to manage one of the best riders in the world, told me I had to try it. She said it’s amazing, and she can’t live without it.’ It took a lot of time to get there, but it has been extremely rewarding.”

Today, BarnManager is the official barn management software of U.S. Equestrian, the governing body of equestrian sport, and the program is utilized by barns throughout Wellington and around the country.

The specialized software is accessible from anywhere by phone, tablet or computer, and offers features including unlimited horse information, health and wellness recording; the ability to upload attachments directly to records and easily access files; searchable barn-wide conversations and messaging, as well as private conversations and messaging; two-way calendar syncing, scheduling and important date reminders; a virtual “white-board” that takes the conventional barn white-board and makes it more accessible; customizable tables and free-form lists; and, most recently added, business management tools, including full accounting services.

“We have a busy show barn and are often showing in two separate locations at once,” said Jo Seaver, who utilizes BarnManager in the management of Kenny and Linda Langmeier’s Kelianda Farm. “BarnManager has helped our staff stay organized and connected throughout the hectic show season. Having our vet, farrier and other records all in one easy access place has been a game changer.”

Lakin hopes to continue to change the way barns are managed in Wellington and nationwide for the ease of the job and to allow barn managers to get back to why they likely



BarnManager is now used in barns throughout Wellington on phones, tablets and computers.

PHOTO BY JUMP MEDIA

began the job in the first place: for the love of horses.

“Nobody gets into the horse industry to be an accountant,” Lakin said. “We don’t want people spending all of their time on QuickBooks or behind a desk trying figure everything out. I strongly believe that when it comes to horses, there’s nothing that can replace something like a human being able to put their hand on a horse’s leg. So, everything that we do is keeping that in mind. We’re trying to supplement and automate things on the business side; that way people can spend more time doing the things that technology can’t.”

To learn more about BarnManager, visit [www.barnmanager.com](http://www.barnmanager.com). ■