

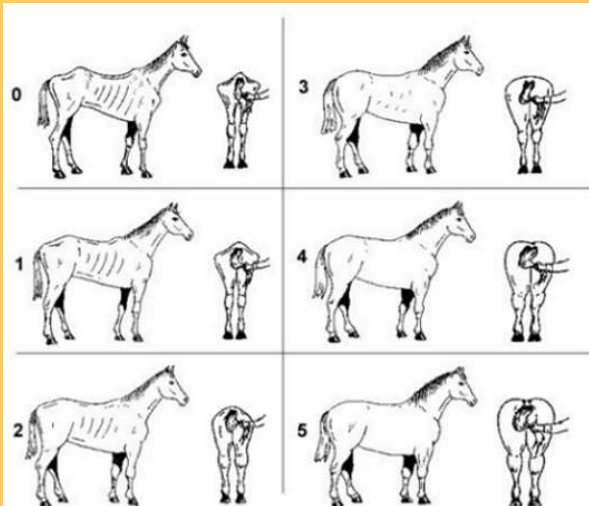
How much do I feed?

**By The Nude Horse
(Equine Epidemiologist)**

Meeting your horse's daily dietary needs is actually very simple. First, rate the horse's body condition, then work out their estimated weight. Reaching their ideal weight/body condition is then a matter of either increasing base feed volumes or continue feeding at daily recommended feed rates until ideal condition is met.

Measuring Body Condition

The body condition of a horse is usually measured simply by visual observation. **Too skinny**- Horses with toplines that have sunken in around the withers, protruding back bone and dished in around the hip bones and hindquarters. Ribs visible, to touch the feel like the knuckles on the back of your hand. **Too fat**- Horses with a sunken back bone and crested neck & ribs hard to feel.



0=too thin, 1=thin, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=fat, 5=too fat



Example of Ideal body weight

Pic Courtesy Rivendell Photograph of Jaymee Lord

Ideally you are seeking a body condition score of 3 (good). The ribs likely not visible, the pelvis will be covered with both muscle and fat. They should be rounded at the withers (unless genetically overly prominent wither bone) back should be flat - no bone protruding or sunken. The ribs should feel slightly padded to touch.

Calculate estimated body weight
 $[Girth (cm^2) \times length (cm)] \div 11\,000 = Weight$

For example:

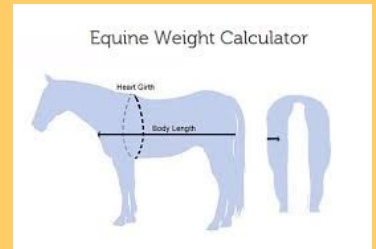
Girth of 190cm (square this) =36100

Then 36100 x 125cm (length) = 4512500

Then 4512500 ÷11000 = **410kg.**

This is an estimate only and could be 50±kg.

Maintenance daily feed requirements



Formula: Multiply 1.7 x estimated horse's weight then divide by 100. Example 1.7 x 410 (kg)= 697, so 697/100 is 6.9kg. Meaning you need to provide 6.9 kg of dry weight feed daily to a horse weighing 410kg.

Hay/grass/chaff should make up at least 70% of the daily diet. A 410kg horse, for example, in maintenance mode feed at least 4.8kg dry weight of hay/grass per day **PLUS** a hard feed (dry weight) a maximum of 2.1kg to make up the daily feed requirement of 6.9kg in this example. The hard feed can of course be less if the roughage is increased to compensate.

You can create a **cost effective & nutritionally balanced** daily feed simply by adding a quality balanced mineral and vitamin supplement to just a few base feeds that are low GI (sustainable energy) and low NSC - sugars (safe for all horses). Choose science backed ingredients such as lupins, beet-pulp, copra & lucerne chaff & lucerne hay.

Making the base feed

The remaining 2.1kg in this scenario can be made up safely with **dry weight** of copra (then wet thoroughly), lupins & beet-pulp (soaked). Soak the lupins & beet-pulp for at least an hour in 5X volume of water to expand fully (this is essential to avoid colic), combine with equal volume of chaff and The Nude Horse recommends FLOWERS GOLD as a premium quality mineral & vitamin supplement. You have now created your own nutritional hard feed. (**READ** <http://www.thenudehorse.com.au/keep-it-simple-diet.html>)

Being in control of your own nutritional input (minerals and vitamins) you know you are meeting daily requirements no matter the volume of dry feed.

Increase volume of feeds to put weight on and reduce to maintenance level once ideal weight gain is achieved. Never feed less than the maintenance rate. Feeding coconut oil can safely provide additional low GI calories.