

Feeding your horse for PERFORMANCE.

***Keep in mind that each horse is an individual. The numbers below are a rough guide. We are happy to analyze your horse's needs via a complete nutritional analysis. The feeding program mentioned below does not account for conditions that may require special dietary management like laminitis, EMS, PPID or "tying up".*

- No matter the discipline, it is important to remember that horses are "trickle feeder" grazing animals. Design their feeding program to allow for "grazing" (eating long stem roughage) over long periods of time, rather than large meals in a rapid fashion.
- All rations should be based on a FORAGE or ROUGHAGE component (primarily hay, some chaff or cubes) of at least 1% body weight to maintain base condition and promote healthy gut function. If needed, concentrate should be added to this.
 - For example, a 500kg horse should receive *at least* 5kg of roughage per day. Most nutritionists recommend at least 1.5% as a bare minimum (7.5kg of roughage per day).

FEED BASED ON WORKLOAD:

- Horses in light work (30-60 minutes per day, some short periods of galloping) should receive a total daily feed volume of around 2.0% body weight. At least 65% of this should be roughage. The remainder can be fed as concentrate (grains, pelleted feeds, protein additives, oils).
 - FOR EXAMPLE:
 - 500kg horse = 10kg of food per day
 - OF this 10kg, 6.5kg should be roughage (75% good quality hay, 25% chaff).
 - Ex: 4.8kg hay, 1.6kg chaff.
 - The remaining 3.5kg can be fed as a concentrate (corn/barley/oats, or a commercial pelleted mix, oil, etc).
- Horses in moderate work (60-120 minutes per day, galloping) should receive a total daily feed of 2.25% body weight. (Intense/heavy work can increase to 3% body weight feed per day). At least 50% of this should be fed as roughage, and the remainder can be made up with concentrates.
 - For Example:
 - 500kg horse = 11.25kg of food per day
 - 5.62kg roughage (4.2kg hay, 1.4kg chaff)
 - 5.62kg concentrate
- Adjust amounts based on your horse's condition. If your horse tends to be thin, increasing feed is required. If your horse is a "good doer", is fat, or becoming fat, reduce the volumes being recommended here.

ROUGHAGE sources:

- If you have good pastures, this requirement *can* be met by grazing alone.
- If pastures are poor, or horses are kept in yards or stalls, this requirement must be met by feeding a good quality, long stem hay.
- If horses are stabled or kept in yards, feed several small meals per day. You can feed a larger, hay based meal overnight to reduce boredom.
- It is recommended to allow your horses out for at least some time during the day for self-exercise and grazing behavior.
- If you feed hay, be sure it is good quality, dust and mould free. Feed off the ground in a trough or pan to reduce sand ingestion. Feeding from hay nets can slow consumption and more closely mimic grazing rates of ingestion.
- If your hay is dry, brittle, dusty, or mouldy, soak it for 10-15 minutes in clean water, and feed after draining.
- If you feed a cereal based hay (oat, wheat), feed a higher protein chaff (Lucerne or 50/50 lucerne/oat).

CONCENTRATE FEEDING:

- You can either make your own concentrate mix (corn/oats/barley etc) OR you can buy a commercial pelleted feed that is completely balanced, and often includes other supplements, vitamins and minerals that are beneficial for your horse's specific needs. Note that balancing your own concentrate mix can be quite a challenge!!
- We recommend the MITAVITE range of feeds.
 - "complete feeds"
 - Added vitamins and minerals
 - Oils already added in some feeds to increase energy levels
 - Low starch options available
- If you are feeding a commercial feed, we recommend feeding this AS DIRECTED on the bag. Then make up the remainder of the diet with roughage.
 - For example, if the Mitavite feed recommends feeding 4kg per day, and your horse's daily intake requirement is 10kg, feed the remaining 6kg as roughage (hay and chaff).
- DO NOT FEED MORE THAN 0.5kg per 100kg STARCH or GRAIN per day (ie 2.5kg max per 500kg horse) to avoid hindgut acidosis.

OILS

- If you add oil to your horse's diet to increase energy content, it is recommended to slowly introduce or adjust oil amounts over 10-14 days.
 - Start with 40mls twice daily, slowly increase over 10-14 days.
 - MAXIMUM AMOUNT ALLOWED = 500mls daily (per 500kg horse)
 - Ensure oils are kept cool, fresh, protected from light. Do not feed rancid oils!
 - If you add oil, reduce the proportionate concentrate amount in the diet.

- Be sure that vitamins, minerals and antioxidant proportions are appropriate in your horse's diet when increasing fat amounts for proper digestion.
- It can take 2-3 months for your horse to adapt to using fat as energy source!
- LIGHT WORK: 70-80 mls oil per day recommended
- Moderate to Heavy work: Up to 450mls per day recommended (Aim for a max of 200mls per day!)
- CORN OIL: current research suggests that CORN OIL can help increase stomach pH, and may help reduce risk of stomach ulcers.

WATER:

- Always have fresh, clean water available.
- If it is a hot day, and your horse has had intense work, do not feed extremely cold water. Add warm water to reduce the chill before drinking.
- Do not allow a horse to GUZZLE water after a workout. Allow a few small drinks every 10 minutes. If it is COLD outside, warm the water especially if offering after strenuous exercise.

ELECTROLYTES:

- If your horse is working in hot, humid conditions, or is a heavy sweater, it is a good idea to add electrolytes to the diet. *(some of the Mitavite feeds already include these).
 - RESEARCH shows that using a concentrated electrolyte just before, and during a high intensity event is BETTER than using nothing.

OTHER TIPS:

- Carbohydrates and fat are the primary energy source relied upon in horses. Fat is the largest energy reservoir.
- Feed a small, roughage based feed (1-2kg) within the 1-3 hours before an event.
- Do not feed a high sugar, starchy feed within 3 hours leading up to an event, as this can lead to a sugar crash during the event.
- Do not feed a LARGE meal before working, as this can cause gut pain. (Do not work on a *full* stomach).
- Feed most of your long stem hay overnight.
- Offer feed after your horse is "cooled down" but fairly short after work so as to allow them to begin replenishing their energy stores, and promote muscle healing and development.
- It can take 3-4 days for glycogen stores to be completely replenished after a hard work! Offer GOOD roughage after exercise!!

REST DAYS:

- Reduce grain and concentrate intake by 1/3 the night BEFORE a scheduled day off, then gradually reintroduce as they come back into work. Replace this amount with chaff or hay. (example: for 1 day off, take 2 days to return to full concentrate feed amount.