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RUNNING OUT OF FOOD - How does it affect my horse?

So its dinner time at the stables, but there is not enough food for your horse. The shop is closed (because that's just always the way, right!), what a disaster!!!! The horses will probably starve, right?

Wrong. Everyone has been there, but to be very honest its not such a huge deal.

Yes disrupting the horses routine and dietary plan is never ideal but the horse isn't going to be concerned over a few meals, why? Because he gets hay and grazing.

Roughage is one factor us as humans overlook, we obsess about what is going in the bucket but forget that the horse's diet shouldn't be made up of concentrate feed only but rather should be made up of roughage (hay and grazing) with a small amount of concentrate to make up for any nutrients not supplied by his roughage.

So missing a few buckets of foods will not be a huge cause for concern as long as the horse has access to hay and /or grazing.

So what should be done?

Well if the horse is going to miss out on a meal or two then simply ensure he has ad lib hay 24/7. This means you provide as much hay as he wants to eat, so this may mean checking him more often and topping up with hay or if you can't get to the yard often enough pop a full bale into his stable or paddock to ensure he can munch away to his heart's content.

If the horse is already getting ad lib hay then it is even less cause for concern and there is no need to worry.

Perhaps he can have some extra time in the paddock also to ensure he can eat as much grass as he likes before coming into his stable, or maybe (if the horse is happy and used to being out) he could stay out 24/7 in his paddock to allow him to graze constantly.



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CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Danielle Pieters and Trenzador's on their win at the Eastern Cape Eventing Championships 2018 at CNC1*.

Trenzador is fed exclusively on Equus as is the entire yard of 40 horses based in Knysna and supplied by Jo Mincione of Top Nosh. In addition to winning the EC Championships - Trenzador and Danielle were 2nd at South African Championships at Kurland in September as well as 4th at Western Province Championships in George in April.

"We have had a super year and I want to thank you for a super product. Trenzador looks absolutely great and always has enough energy to perform at his best."

Congratulations Danielle and all the best for 2019.

#equusfeeds #happyhorses



For an absolutely free consultation with no further obligation contact our professional consultants to schedule a visit to your yard.

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Could borrowed feed be used?

If it's the same as the horse in question, then by all means. However, if it is different then perhaps it is not such a good idea.

We all know that sudden changes to a horse's diet should be avoided. It takes the horse's digestive system 7-10 days to adapt to something new in the diet, and so with this in mind changing suddenly for only 2 meals and then changing back again could put the horse at risk of digestive upset.

If, however the feed will be in short/no supply for 3-4 weeks+ (due to the manufacturer closing or being cut off due to floods or natural disasters) then yes it may be wise to start something new, however take time and introduce this new feed slowly and over the above time period.

But won't he lose out on essential vitamins and minerals?

Maybe, but this really isn't going to be a big problem if it is for a very short period of time. If you know you are going to be out of food for a long time (2 weeks +) then yes, this is more concerning, and you may want to see if you can at least get hold of a vitamin and mineral supplement or balancer.

But he is agitated and seems starving?

Yes ok so the horse may call, and seem cross but that's more to do with the fact he is expecting something extra at a specific time.

Combat this with providing some carrots or apples in a bowl with a little chopped hay (get out the scissors) and he will be quite thankful. No matter what type of concentrate food is given, it should not be feeding to curb the horse's hunger but rather to supplement with key nutrients. Hay and grazing is what is going to keep the horse full.

But the horse is pregnant, young, old?

Again, we all know running out of food is not ideal, but it happens and even to horses in important life stages such as these, a few days will make no difference.

Should I continue with my supplements?

If supplements are being given and the horse is happy to have them sprinkled on some carrots or apples then by all means. Some horses need food to mask tastes and so don't be surprised if they don't seem to want them. If a balancer or vitamin and mineral supplement is being fed anyway then you are totally covered in terms of essential nutrients and so your horse should be 100% fine.

When I get food should I introduce it back slowly over 7-10 days?

As it is for such a short period of time, for most horses, it is not necessary to introduce so slowly. However if the horse is prone to digestive upset then work up to feeding the full daily amount over 2-3 days just to be extra cautious. If the horse has been completely off food for several weeks, then yes, take 7-10 days to reintroduce.



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