



BLENDING NATURE AND TECHNOLOGY

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newsletter

this month's issue



1. 5 Horse Feeding Myths laid to rest
2. Equus How To
3. Vitamin - Calcium and Phosphorus (Ca and P)
4. Contact Us

Equus All Time Balancer

Please note that the **Equus All Time Balancer** is now made in a smaller pellet size.

The composition, however, remains exactly the same and NO ingredient changes have been made.

At Equus we pride ourselves in producing quality feeds and believe this change in pellet size will allow us to provide our clients with an even more consistent product without needing to add large amounts of unwanted extras such as molasses.

This reduction in pellet size also has the benefit of being more suitable for young foals and older horses with dentition issues.

Please note that it may take some time for this smaller cube to become available at your retailer.

5 Horse Feeding Myths laid to rest

As with so many aspects of equine management there are many nuggets of sound advice and sometimes advice well worth avoiding. Five of the most common misconceptions are detailed below:

Myth # 1:

Concentrates or grains should form the foundation of a horse's diet, and hay is secondary

False: Horses evolved on grasslands, wide-open spaces that offered a variety of vegetation from which to pick and choose. As such, their digestive tract is designed to break down forages and to derive energy from the digestion of those plants. The energy needs of certain horses, particularly members of breeds known to have low metabolic rates, can be met by forage alone.

Most horses will eat somewhere between 1.5 to 2.2% of body weight per day. Forage should make up the majority of that amount. The absolute minimum forage requirement for any horse is 1% of its body weight. Therefore, a 500kg horse would require 5 kilograms of forage daily. Only a few circumstances should ever require such a minimal forage intake, so a more reasonable recommended forage minimum



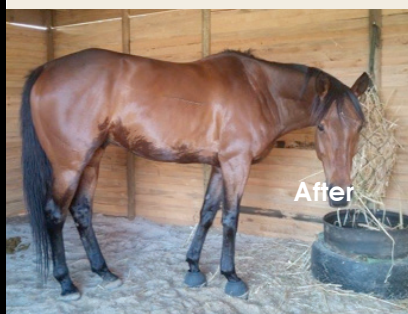
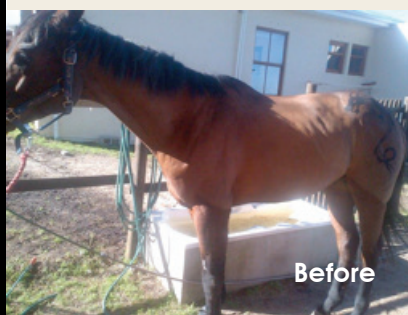
Testimonials

Dear Equus

I just wanted to share with you why I always sing your praises. Orion's Star was fed **Equus Train 'n Leisure** for over a year. I was very happy with how lovely and conditioned he was. Then I moved him to a yard where he had to change to a different concentrate. Despite being in consistent work he lost a lot of weight. Increasing his feed just made him hot. In May this year we moved to a friend's yard where I was able to put him back onto Equus. Within 10 weeks I have my beautiful boy back.

I am so happy with the results I've seen, I will never have him on anything else again!

Thank you so much
Maryke Marais



is 1.5% of body weight daily, which would be 7,5kg per day for a 500kg horse. Certain classes of horses might consume more. Lactating mares, for example, may eat 3- 5% of body weight at peak milk production. Concentrates should not be neglected for those horses that require them. Selection of the right concentrate for the individual can be key to making effective use of forages and balancing the diet.

Myth # 2:

Lucerne hay is best left for dairy cows, not horses

False: Lucerne hay is a useful forage in the management of horses, and in some parts of the world, it is a staple feedstuff. The advantages of lucerne hay are numerous: most horses like the flavor so they are apt to clean up a serving; it is packed with energy; it has ulcer-calming properties; and it comes in convenient alternative forms such as cubes and pellets. Lucerne may not be the right fit for every horse but concerns of alfalfa being too rich for all horses are unfounded as many horses require the nutrient boost this legume provides.

Compared to grass hay, Lucerne hay is richer in energy, protein and certain minerals such as calcium. Specific classes of horses benefit from being fed lucerne, including those with increased calorie needs such as youngsters, lactating mares, aged horses, and some performance horses. Because of its palatability, it is usually fed to horses recuperating from illness or those that have a limited appetite. As with all hays, there is a wide range of lucerne quality so care should be taken when sourcing this product.

Myth #3:

Protein is the root of all evils, and every precaution should be made to rid a diet of excessive protein

Protein is a vital nutrient for all horses, and its functions in the body are numerous. Protein deficiency can be caused by a diet of poor-quality hay with little or no concentrate. Deficiency is characterized by muscle wasting, difficulty staying focused, and a general lack of energy. Some protein-deficient horses have a distinct loss of muscling over the top line, with protruding backbone and hipbones.

Protein is not energy. In fact it is an inefficient energy source. When given a choice, the body would rather use other nutrients for energy such as carbohydrates and fats. However in an energy-deficient diet, the body breaks down muscle tissue to use the protein for energy to fuel the body as a last resort.

Horses are adept at processing protein, so there is no need to worry about adversely affecting kidney function. Nitrogen is a by product of protein digestion, and it is filtered by the kidneys and excreted from the body. Because of excessive nitrogen secretion in the urine, a strong ammonia smell might accompany a high-protein diet. Many horses that consume high-protein diets will also drink more water than usual, which increases urination. However excessive ammonia can aggravate conditions such as COPD (Chronic Obstructive

Dear Equus

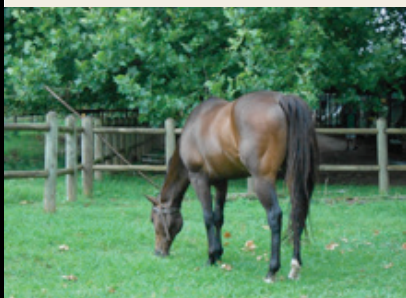
I just wanted to send you this photo of my four horses.

I feed them all **Equus Safe 'n Lite** and **Equus Nice 'n Easy** and they have never looked better. I am incredibly happy with how my horses look and perform, and I always encourage others to use your products.

As I often say "The Four that stick together will stay Safe n' Lite forever"

Thank you for your service and help

Terry Baker



Pulmonary Disease) and since protein is expensive, horses should ideally not eat more than required. On the growth front, there is no evidence that developmental orthopaedic disease in young horses is brought about by too much protein. In fact, it is thought that rapid growth created by incorrect energy levels can have a bigger effect on DOD (Developmental Orthopaedic Disease).

A balanced diet reviewed by an equine nutritionist will ensure that young horses are correctly nourished for steady and safe growth.

Myth # 4:

Wheat Bran has a Laxative Effect

Previously, bran was thought to have a laxative effect that would "clean them out" and help to prevent colic. Cornell University researchers studied the laxative effect of bran at various levels in the diet, with some horses being fed up to 50 % hay and 50 % bran. They found that there were only slight variations in water content of the droppings at various feeding levels and certainly not enough to pronounce bran a laxative. Another study compared the droppings of horses fed a ration of 10 % bran and 90 % chopped hay to those fed 100 % chopped hay. No difference in the water content of the droppings was found.

So why do horses produce watery droppings when they eat a bran mash? Since feeding bran mash only occasionally, or even weekly, represents a sudden change in diet as the gut microbes see it, they start to die off. This is what causes the diarrhea or watery droppings that horse owners erroneously assume is a laxative effect and which can actually do more harm than good.

Myth #5:

Feeding rates on feed bag tags are exaggerated, and my horse is fine with just a handful of feed each day

Manufacturers design feeding rates to reflect the level of fortification in the feed. Fortification is the amount of protein, minerals, and vitamins added to a feed to make it nutritionally appropriate for the class of horse for which it is intended. Giving 'just a handful of feed' will supply few calories and few nutrients.

If horses are not fed the minimum recommended amount per day, they will not get an adequate supply of nutrients. If a horse becomes obese by feeding the minimum requirements, it is possible to limit caloric intake and still supply vital nutrients by replacing the concentrate with a ration balancer pellet or a well-formulated vitamin/mineral supplement in conjunction with appropriate forage.

Reference

<http://www.equinews.com/article/decision-2011-laying-to-rest-five-feeding-myths>

Equus How to: Handle a suspected horse poisoning

Picture this scenario: A pastured horse develops hair loss, itching, dermatitis, colic, laminitis, or even sudden death, and the owner is certain the problem must have been caused by something the horse touched or ate.

The first and most urgent task is to have a veterinarian diagnose and treat the affected horse as all these symptoms could be related to very treatable conditions. However, if on veterinary inspection, poisoning is suspected then preventing another poisoning occurrence will involve identifying susceptible horses as well as finding and removing the poisoning agent.

If all signs indicate that contact with, or ingestion of, a poisonous substance was in fact the cause of the horse's illness, the source of the dangerous substance must be found and isolated or removed so that no more horses will become ill. The source could be something such as fertilizer or roadside debris that has been introduced into the pasture, or it could be a plant, leaf, shrub, or weed growing in the field. In the case of plant material, the question is not easily answered because almost every pasture sports an array of potentially harmful plants. Whether or not an adverse reaction occurs will be dependent on the time of year, climate, plant part and amount ingested, and the overall health and immune status of the affected horse.

Determine whether the horse in question had a reason to eat something it would not normally ingest. Starving, or very thin horses, are at higher risk than other horses for eating questionable plants. Insufficient high-quality feed, could cause hungry horses to eat anything available, often resulting in a serious reaction. Well-fed horses usually avoid toxic plants, and are in better condition to survive a poisoning episode if this occurs.



Determine the feeding practices, recording whether horses have 24-hour access to pasture or only limited grazing time, and also how much hay or concentrate they are fed. Also check water sources to ensure that the water provided has not been affected. This is especially important where bore holes are used. List all hay, feeds, supplements, whole grains, nutraceuticals, and whatever else the horses may have been given. It is wise to check all sell by dates to ensure everything that has been fed is within manufacturer's guidelines. All feeds, supplements and nutraceuticals should always be stored in sealed containers, in cool dry conditions. Leaving products in less than ideal conditions could cause problems such as mould.

The investigator should open and inspect several bales of hay and identify the types of grasses and plants found. It should be determined if hay was baled from clean fields or whether it might contain plants from wet places, hedgerows, or weedy areas. If horses are kept in stables for any part of the day, the type of bedding should be examined and identified, and an attempt should be made to find out what its source is. In many investigations, the primary cause is often missed. Practitioners need to take charge of the situation and complete a thorough farm investigation. An open mind and common sense will reduce the number of undiagnosed or unresolved cases and result in an understanding of the primary inciting cause.

Reference: <http://www.equinews.com/article/handling-suspected-horse-poisoning>

Vitamin-Macrominerals- Calcium and Phosphorus (Ca and P)

What does it do?

Calcium plays a vital role in bone structure and repair. Calcium makes up about 35% of the horse's bone structure, but is also involved in a host of other functions, including cardiac muscle contraction, cell membrane integrity, glandular secretion, temperature regulation, and blood clotting mechanisms. It is almost impossible to discuss calcium without considering its partner, phosphorus, which is also essential to the growth and maintenance of healthy bones and teeth as well as to energy metabolism and numerous cellular functions. In addition, phosphorus plays an important role in late pregnancy and lactation, during which times a mare's phosphorus needs increase.

The ratio of calcium to phosphorus in the equine diet is crucial. Most researchers feel the ideal balance is about 1.2 parts calcium to 1 part phosphorus, up to about 1.6:1. Excess dietary phosphorus, in any form, binds calcium and prevents its absorption, but the same is not true in reverse; excess calcium has almost no effect on the absorption of phosphorus.

Sources

Hay, especially legume hay such as Lucerne, is calcium-rich while grains are high in phosphorus. A balance of hay to grains must thus be achieved.



Deficiency

Signs of deficiency are rare in horses today as most horses are fed a high fibre diet with adequate levels of concentrates. However, those fed high grain diets with little forage may produce symptoms.

Signs can include developmental bone abnormalities in foals, "big head disease" (also called bran disease) in adult horses, decreased bone density, stiffness and possible lameness, weight loss, loose teeth, and fragile bones. Most of the same signs will occur if a phosphorus deficiency exists.

Deficiencies of either mineral result in mobilization of these minerals from the bone. In this way, while the bone is weakened, the other body functions to which calcium and phosphorus are pivotal are maintained.

One of the few other causes of calcium deficiency in horses is the ingestion of plants containing high amounts of oxalate compounds, which inhibit calcium absorption. Plants such as sorrel, dock, rhubarb, purslane, kikuyu grass, and lambs quarter can contain potentially harmful amounts of oxalates. They are primarily a problem for young horses and might also cause diarrhoea and gastroenteritis.

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

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