



# THE SMALL THINGS

## IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

1. THE SMALL THINGS
2. TESTIMONIAL

### Sometimes Small Things make the biggest difference – Omeprazole and Calcium digestibility.

It's well known that making changes to the diet of the horse should be done slowly over a period of time, but often small things are overlooked. Take medication for example. It is provided in order to assist in the overall health of the horse, however some medications can have an impact on the diet of the horse which could lead to unintentional areas for concern.

Omeprazole for example, which is widely used to treat Gastric Ulcers in the horse, has recently been shown by Kentucky Equine Research to potentially cause a reduced calcium digestibility. What does this finding mean to horse owners who rely on the medication to keep their horses healthy?

#### Gastric Ulcers in Horses and Omeprazole

"Researchers estimate 40-90% of horses have gastric ulcers, with those engaged in certain athletic disciplines, such as racing, at higher risk. Excessive gastric acid production ranks as a primary trigger for the development of ulcers. Omeprazole prevents gastric acid secretion in horses, thus rendering it an effective treatment for ulcers.

Omeprazole and other drugs known as proton pump inhibitors are used to treat acid-related conditions in humans. When given to humans, reduced gastric acid production is associated with a decline in the digestibility of several nutrients, including protein, fat, calcium, iron, and vitamin B12. In horses, however, the effect of omeprazole on nutrient digestibility was unknown.



A study was therefore designed to determine the effect of short-term administration of omeprazole on the digestibility of several nutrients.

Researchers found that omeprazole did not affect the digestibility of dry matter, crude protein, fat, acid detergent fiber, neutral detergent fiber, starch, or water-soluble carbohydrates. Omeprazole did not change the digestibility of any mineral except calcium. Calcium digestibility decreased by as much as 20% in horses given omeprazole.

## Adding Perspective for Horse Owners

Because of its efficacy in healing gastric ulcers, omeprazole is commonly prescribed to horses. When given at the recommended dose, omeprazole is intended to be used for 28 days. What should horse owners do to ensure optimal calcium digestibility when treating their horses with omeprazole?

First, take a close look at the horse's total diet. If horses are being fed a concentrate feed at the rate recommended by the manufacturer and good-quality hay or pasture, especially if there is Lucerne in the mix, the amount of calcium consumed is likely to be adequate and no changes in diet is necessary.

If, on the flip side, a concentrate feed is not fed or is blended with a cereal grain, such as oats, and a grass hay is offered, adjustments to the diet may be necessary to ensure optimal calcium status. A horse on this diet might need an additional 10 g of calcium per day".

## How can horse owners supply additional calcium?

An easy way to add calcium is through the addition of good-quality Lucerne hay. 1kg of Lucerne (as long-stem hay, cubes, or pellets) could provide around 8 -20g of calcium depending on the Lucerne source and quality.

Alternatively, calcium can be supplied using research-proven supplements, or through the use of a carefully balanced diet. Using a nutritional advisor to assess a horses diet and make adjustments is key when dealing with nutrients such a calcium as you don't want to make errors to other components or ratios (such as the calcium: phosphorous ratio) that could also effect the horse.

## References:

Article adapted from <https://ker.com/equine/omeprazole-and-calcium-digestibility-what-horse-owners-should-know/>

# TESTIMONIAL

Good day!

I've recently changed my horse over to Equus Cool and Perform 15% and I'm super impressed with how he has changed. He is looking and feeling fantastic and the best part of it is I don't have to over feed him, which makes it very affordable. Due to these results I also decided to put one of my training horses on it and I could immediately see the difference in him within 2 weeks, his weight, his coat and energy is perfect.

I just love how my horses look and feel. And the how quickly they've changed since they have been on Equus.

I would certainly recommend this food above other brands! Keep up the good work guys!

Kind Regards

**Andri du Plessis**

*Right: Picture of my beautiful, 8 year old Friesian stallion Adelprag Hilton ridden at EM level Dressage.*

