

Simple, Logical, Inexpensive way to feed your Performance horse

Quarter horses have come along way in their performance use, athleticism, breeding and beauty since the three stallions, Vaquero, Jackaroo and Gold Standard arrived in Australia in 1954. Whilst QH excel in most equine disciplines we find many of them competing in Western performance sports such as Cutting, Reining, Working Cow Horse, Western Pleasure, Ranch Riding and Hunter classes. They also have great presence in Pony club, Hacking, Dressage, Show Jumping and Campdrafting.

With a good eye, you can pick what type of discipline a QH is bred for. Quarter Horses have become very specialised and bred with the special traits that make them excel in the breeder's chosen sport.

A really important fact to consider, is that while these Quarter horses may look a little different from each other, based on their athletic requirement, their digestive system has not evolved or changed since they were first domesticated. Feeding a horse is not complicated when we understand that the horse's digestive system has remained the same for give or take 15,000 years.

The Quarter Horse needs to be fed a species-specific feed, no matter what it's workload.

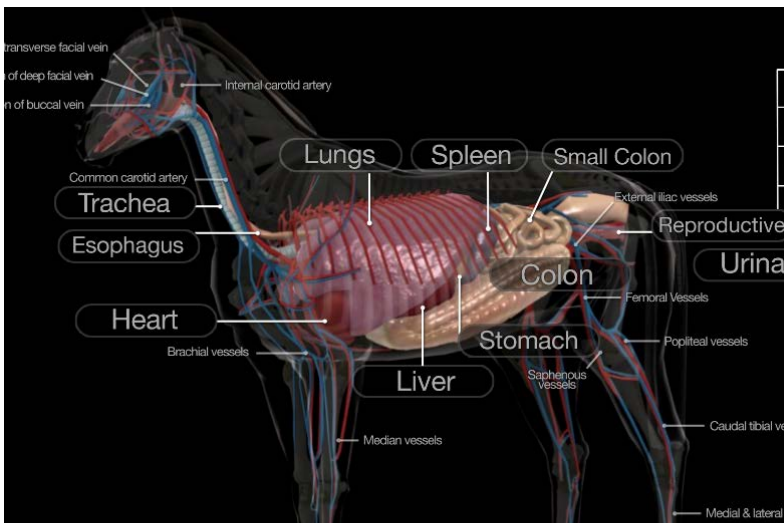


Horses need to eat a natural diet. Not only is it cost effective but also far healthier for your horse. The digestive system of each horse is the same, however the biochemical individuality of each horse is different.

Feeding premixed feeds does not take in to consideration the type of horse, temperament, workload or environmental factors. Fast food for horses is not ideal. You need to know what is going in to every dipper without fillers and unnatural ingredients that give the product a long shelf live.

You need to be able to take control of what you are feeding your horse and modify for each individual horse. You can't do this with premixed feeds.





Horses have unique digestive systems that are designed to process good-quality forages. In order to feed our horses properly, and to meet the increased demands we place on them for work, growth, reproduction and maintenance, we must understand the equine digestive tract and horse feeds.

Most of us realise that a horse's stomach makes up only a small portion of the digestive tract. The stomach is designed to continually process small amounts of forage and feed.

Feeding a horse large feeds will cause digestive disorders such as colic, ulcers, founder and tying-up. We are too ready to accept these conditions as common place when owning a horse. These conditions have been on the rise over the last 2-3 decades which coincides with the way we have changed our feeding practices.

Different forms of Roughage



Good quality pasture is the ideal roughage for many horses. Nature intended for horses to walk around foraging and browsing which helps with peristalsis (pushing the digesta through the digestive tract).

Pasture can also be a cause of conditions such as Nutritional Hyperparathyroidism (Big Head) or toxicity. You need to make sure your pasture is suitable for horses to graze.

Pasture is not always available, nor does it always supply the nutritional requirements required for performance horses.

Pasture can be used to meet some or all of a horse's roughage needs. Because of the use of chemicals and fertilisers in modern farming methods, pastures are often deficient in several major minerals and required nutrients.

Good quality Grass Hay is the best roughage with a balance of protein, energy, and fibre for horses. Choose bright green hay that is dust and mould free. If it has been tested, refer to the results and check that it is low in non-structural carbohydrates (NSC) and starch. Allow horses between 1.5% and 3% of their body weight of good quality grass hay. Therefore, the average 500 kg QH can consume 7kg to 15 kg. If the horse is on the heavy side, then feed in a slow feeder, slowing the consumption down, but don't leave them without food. The trickle system of the digestive has not evolved to go without a continuous supply of feed.



Lucerne and Clover are examples of legumes. They contain more protein, energy, calcium, and Vitamin A than grass. The inclusion of some legumes (20% - 50% in rations for growing and working horses and brood mares takes advantage of these additional nutrients. Be mindful of too much lucerne or clover with high protein levels, do not over do it, especially with young stock that will be susceptible to DOD (Developmental Orthopaedic Disease). Clover also contains high levels of photo-phytates which can cause Photosynthesis in pink skinned horses.

Fibre pellets are available such as Hi Forms Complete feeds which are made up of consistent, good quality partial or complete roughage sources. Pellets contain higher leaf to stem ration, more concentrated nutrients and less waste compared to most long-stemmed hays. These pellets are ideal for travelling and can be soaked for older horses with dental problems. HiForm Complete Feeds are used as complete feed or to extend, supplement or replace roughage. It has no by product and is species specific.



Problems associated with modern compound feeds

The horse feed industry is not regulated and many of the equine feeds have been extrapolated from the agricultural industry, where the most important consideration is to convert the food into meat or milk as cheaply as possible. There are so many physiological difference between cattle and horses and real concerns about the long term safety for horses of some of these products.

Many concentrate feeds contain too many by-products such as sugars and flavourings and other inappropriate raw materials. Most include a vitamin and mineral pre-mix which may contain a high level of synthetic products. Raw material are not always declared on a feed bag in a way which makes their nature clear without specialist knowledge. The horse is not equipped to process these ingredients and over time may start treating them as pathogens. This will compromise the horse's health.

The most appropriate way to feed any QH is to feed the roughage they need, such as hay and lucerne. Concentrate rations is added when more energy is required. Grains such as Oats and Barley will not cause added heat and fizz if fed along with a natural roughage diet. Soy, Flax or other vegetable oils may also be used for extra energy and have the advantage of being easily digested. They contain little or no protein. The key factor is to add a daily formula to provide the nutritional support your horse needs that he or she is not receiving through the natural roughage diet.

It is very easy to see when a horse is healthy. If you want to cut through all the confusion about feeding your horse, please contact us at HiForm on 03 9775 6422 or email enq@hiform.com.au. We don't have sales staff, we have qualified practitioners ready to give you the best advice possible for your horse.

