

Equine Feeding Guidelines

- Guidelines are just guidelines. You must make sure that your horse(s) are fed properly by monitoring their body condition score and weight. If you are unsure of how to do this please ask us and we will help guide you.
- Important note is to make any feed changes gradually over a long time period.
- You must consider the following factors when determining a feeding program for your horse(s):
 - **Stage of development (weanling, yearling, 2-year-old)**--The nutrient requirements for each age group are different.
 - **Desired growth rate**--Is there a set time when the young horse should be fit and sleek (if going to public auctions or shows), or can he be allowed to grow more slowly?
 - **Availability and quality of feedstuffs**--Different feedstuffs provide varying amounts of nutrients, so balancing the nutrients between forage and concentrates is important for the overall diet.
 - **Feeding practices**--Are horses grouped together or can you separate them to handle an individual's needs?
 - **Current body condition**--Does he need to lose weight, gain weight, or is he growing just right?
 - **Confinement**--If he is confined to a stall, he needs less digestible energy than if he's turned out.
 - **Weather/climate**--In colder climates, a horse requires more energy to deal with the weather.
 - **Temperament**--If a horse is very enthusiastic, he probably will need more dietary energy than a placid horse.
- **Nursing foals** need be exposed to a balanced concentrate. The typical lactating mare feed is balanced for a foal's growth. For further instruction see the foal nutrition handout.
- Due to limited digestive ability, **weanlings** should be eating 0.5 – 1.0 % of their body weight in forage and 1.5 – 3.0% of their body weight in concentrate daily.
- **Yearlings** should be eating 1.0 – 1.5% of their body weight in forage and 1.0 – 2.0% of their body weight in concentrate daily.
- **Long Yearlings and two year olds** should be eating equal amounts of 1.0 -1.5% of their body weight in forage and concentrate daily. Amounts of concentrates can be reduced if condition is too heavy or growth is too fast. Remember to feed to a body condition score you desire.
- **Adult horses** should be feed 2.0 – 2.5% of their body weight in forage daily and provided a balance mineral and vitamin supplement. Concentrates can be added when needed to help maintain the body condition score due to activity demands, weather conditions or limited/poor quality forage.
- In every instance, maximize the amount of forage fed to aid in the prevention of colic, especially in the younger horses. Typically offering free choice quality hay.
- Remember horses are designed to eat 16 - 18 hours per day. Therefore split daily feed into multiple meals. This will maximize GI health and minimize health and behavior problems.

Please, if you have any questions about your feeding program ask your feed company's nutritionist or your veterinarian.