

Licking Valley Veterinary Services

Equine Nutrition Guidelines

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When feeding a healthy horse we must consider that horses are designed to eat and survive a certain way and what is healthiest for the horse is typically what is more natural for a horse. Concentrate food is discouraged unless it is required to satisfy the metabolic needs of a horse that are not being met by grass and hay. Here are some general guidelines for horse nutrition.

Water

Water should be fresh & clean and at least 24 L / day or 1 gallon/100 # per day should be provided.

Grasses/Hay

Horses are meant to be on a pasture grazing continuously. If forage is scarce or pasture unattainable hay can be feed that meets the metabolic needs of 55% energy and 10-12% Crude Protein. Hay can be feed at 0.75% - 2.5% Body weight of the individual horse per day (0.75-1% under most circumstances).

This chart represents guidelines for feeding horses. Always provide hay or grass at full amounts and then add concentrate as needed to supplement what hay and grass cannot provide.

Ridden 1-2 x a week	Feed 100% forage and trace mineral mix
Ridden 3x a week	Feed 100% forage added to < 25% concentrate
Strenuous Ridding & Training 5 days a week	Feed 100% forage added to <40% concentrate
Elite Athletes (Race Horses/Endurance rides)	Feed 100% Forage added to <50% concentrate

Concentrate

If you must feed concentrate feed no more than 0.5% BW in one meal and feed based off of the horse's weight and percent concentrate from their activity level based on the chart above. An 1100 # horse would get 11 # of hay and 2.75# (25% of total diet) concentrate once a day. Concentrate should be 10-12% crude protein and 3-10% fat. Increase the concentrate slowly so not to upset the gastrointestinal tract of a horse.

Growing Horses

Horses grow between 4-24 months of age and should get more food to help this growth but do not increase to higher protein and energy levels of the feed. 1-3.5% of body weight per day can be appropriate.

Salt Blocks

Salt & or mineral blocks should always be provided free choice containing: 10 -12% Calcium (Ca), 8-10%, Phosphorus (P), 90 ppm Selenium (Se)

Pregnant Mares

First 8 months –Maintenance levels, 9 months 1.11 x maintenance, 10 months 1.13 x maintenance, 11 months 1.2 x maintenance, Lactation (first 3 months)3-3.5% of body weight per day.

If you have any questions please call Licking Valley Veterinary Service to schedule an exam for your horse. Remember, feed to condition and if your feeding program results in a Body Condition Score of a horse that is less or more than desirable the feeding program needs to be altered to suit the needs of the individual horse.