

The Correct Way to Feed Your Horse

After paying stabling fees for your horse, feeding him is probably your next greatest cost. It is important to feed a balanced ration to keep your horse healthy and happy. Many companies try to sell fancy supplements, but it all comes down to the basics.

Horses are hind gut fermenters, meaning their basic need is for forages. Forages are provided to horses in the form of hay. As a general guideline horses should be fed one to two pounds of hay for every 100 pounds of bodyweight. This amount can vary greatly depending on the activity level of your horse. The hay should be of high quality, free of mold, and other debris.

Pastures can be another source of forage for your horse. A high quality pasture could provide for almost all your horse's nutritional needs. About one to two acres of pasture is required for each horse.

Additional grain is necessary for growing horses and horses who exercise or perform. Grain is usually provided in the form of crushed oats or corn with molasses. Grain is usually fed twice daily. The amount of grain should be carefully regulated so you don't upset their digestive tract.

Nutritional supplements should be offered in the form of free choice mineral blocks and salt blocks placed in the stall or pasture. Many companies try to sell fancy supplements for horses. The majority of these are not necessary and are a waste of money. Most horses can receive all the nutrition they need through a high quality forage diet.

As with all animals, horses require access to fresh clean water at all times. The source of water should not be next to the hay feeder or it could become full of hay, thereby preventing them from drinking.

Some horses can have certain medical problems and need to be fed in a certain way. Some horses have allergies, similar to people, to hay or dust. These horses cannot have hay or be exposed to dust. So to provide forage to these horses, they need to eat fresh grass. Other horses may colic easily when given grain or other treats. These horses should just be kept on a strict diet of forages.

By taking the time to provide your horse with a nutritious diet you are ensuring them a healthy life. Also, by providing a complete diet, you will save money by having fewer medical and veterinary bills.

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