



EQUINE LIFE

PREMIUM HORSE FEED
FOR EVERY LIFE STAGE

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Horse Talk

Dear Horse Enthusiast:

This month's newsletter focuses on the basics of nutrition for the performance horse. We know your goal is to maximize your horse's performance. One way to do so is by supplying the right amount of Digestible Energy (DE) and Protein.

The examples below provide insight and information to ensure your horse is receiving exactly what he needs to thrive.

We offer our customers, at no charge, nutritional testing of your hay. From the results we will develop a customized feeding program. Please call me should you want to set-up an appointment to discuss your horse's nutritional profile in more detail.

Thank you,

Jim Elias, Equine Nutrition & Sales

Feed For The Need - Understanding ENERGY (calories) and THE PERFORMANCE HORSE.

If you have a Performance Horse, you will need to feed it properly or it will not achieve it's full genetic potential. This is like putting low-grade gas in a high performance car – it will probably start, but not win any races because it does not have the octane needed by the engine. In order to understand this article, you will need to know the following terms: Mcal stands for "Megacalorie" – a term to describe caloric levels. DE stands for "Digestible Energy" - the difference of the energy (calories) in the feed minus the calories lost in the manure--essentially, the calories that get absorbed into the system of the horse. All horses require a certain amount of Mcals of DE. Supply too little, the animal will lose weight. Supply too much, the animal will gain weight. As an example, we will review different requirements for an 1,100 lb. horse.

DIFFERENT FEEDING REQUIREMENTS FOR AN 1,100 LB. MATURE HORSE

Activity Level	Mcals of DE	% of Body Weight Consumed
Maintenance or idle	16.4	1.75%—19 lbs. grain and hay
Light work/pleasure horses, i.e. Western & English, equitation	20.5 (25% more than the idle horse)	2.5%—28 lbs. grain and hay
Moderate work, i.e. Jumping, roping, barrel racing, cutting	24.6 (50% more than the idle horse)	2.5%—28 lbs. grain and hay (same as above)
Intense work, i.e. Race training or polo	32.8 (60% more than the idle horse)	3%—33 lbs. grain and hay

Working horses present a feeding challenge as their DE (caloric) requirements are higher vs. idle horses. It is not a good idea to overfeed high starchy rations to meet DE needs since the digestive system of the horse cannot handle large feedings of starch at one time. Starches that do not get broken down in the small intestine enter the cecum and can create digestive upsets in this area. Starch digesting bacteria

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Horse Talk *continued*

multiply, lactic acid increases and all sorts of problems including colic and laminitis can occur. This is why high fat feeds have become so popular – you do not need to feed as much grain to meet DE requirements because a lot of calories are being supplied from the fat in the ration (vegetable oils are best).

Since forage should be at least one-half of the total ration, getting enough calories into your moderate and intense work horse can be a problem, especially if your hay is stemmy. Stemmy hay is not only low in protein, but also low in DE.

Let's review how this would affect the 1,100 lb. Jumper horse (considered moderate work) in our previous example. This horse should be able to eat 18 lbs. of hay per day. Late bloom Timothy hay is approximately .72 Mcals per pound. Therefore, you are providing 18 lbs. of hay X .72 Mcal/lb. = 12.96 total Mcals supplied from the hay consumed. The requirements of this animal are 24.6 Mcals. Simple subtraction tells you that you need to supply an additional 11.6 Mcals from your grain/feed mix. If you are feeding a low energy/low fat mix (.9 Mcal/lb.) you will need to feed 12.9 pounds per day to meet the energy needs. However, if you feed a high fat/ high caloric feed (1.4Mcal/lb.), you will only need to feed 8.3 pounds per day. Feeding 8.3 lbs. per day of a high fat feed is better for the horse vs. feeding 12.9 lbs. per day of a cheaper grain mix. Again, this is better for the horse and possibly cheaper in the long run for you. Beware of low cost/high carbohydrate feeds that are least costed. Regarding the protein requirement, this particular Jumper needs to eat 2.2 lbs. of pure protein per day (from hay and grain). The 18 pounds of your Timothy hay should provide 1.17 pounds of protein. Therefore, you only need to supply 1.03 pounds of protein from your grain ration. By dividing protein needed by the 8.3 lbs. of grain necessary for DE requirements you find that your grain mix should be about 12.4% protein. Therefore, your final ration for this 1,100 lb. Jumper Horse being fed late cutting Timothy should be 18 lbs. of hay and 8.3 lbs. of 12.4% grain (that is 1.4 Mcal/lb.).

In order to be fairly accurate with your feeding program, you need to know:

1. The approximate weight of your horse – purchase a weight tape or use one of the formulas available for calculating weight.
2. The pounds of hay your horse is consuming per day--weigh several bales, get an average, and divide pounds fed by number of animals fed. Allow for some wastage if a lot of your hay ends up as bedding.
3. The quality of hay your horse is consuming – stemmy hay will be low in protein and DE. You may also not get good consumption from stemmy hay. The better quality hay the less that will be required from your grain mix.
4. Weigh your grain – you need to know how many pounds of grain you are feeding.

Below are Equine Life Performance Feeds DE levels:

- *Equine Life 12% Performance Plus feed is 1.5 Mcals per pound*
- *Equine Life 14% Hi Fat Sweet feed is 1.5 Mcals per pound*
- *Equine Life 12% Hi Fat Pellets are 1.4 Mcals per pound*
- *Equine Life 14% Hi Fat Pellets are 1.4 Mcals per pound*

Equine Life has a feed for all life and work stages. Our products are not only balanced for DE and protein, but also include necessary minerals, vitamins, and trace elements. In future newsletters we will discuss feeding Brood Mares, Milking Mares, Weanlings and Yearlings.

I am always available to answer any questions you may have regarding Equine Life Premium Horse Feed. I can be reached at 800-345-0419, ext. 2208 or via E-mail at equinelife@emoyer.com.