



EQUINE LIFE

Premium Horse Feed
For Every Life Stage

Manufactured by 

Horse Talk

Welcome to the premier edition of **Horse Talk**. We hope you find this newsletter informative and educational. Please let us know if there are any particular topics on which you would like us to focus in upcoming issues.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our long-standing customers for recommending Moyer & Son, Inc.'s products to our new customers. We sincerely appreciate the referrals that have been given by our loyal customers.

We look forward to hearing from you,

Jim Elias, Equine Nutrition/Sales

NUTRITION 101: *Did You Know . . .*

- * Horses are grazing animals. Their digestive system is designed to continually forage. They crave two things: salt and forage (hay/pasture). Many years ago horses walked for eighteen hours or more a day while continually grazing.
- * Over the years, man has changed the diets of the animals that he has domesticated. Years ago it took a year for a baby pig to reach market weight, which is about 225 pounds. Today, six months or less is normal to achieve the same goal.
- * Years ago, dairy cows only milked 40 pounds of milk per day (at peak). Today, cows will milk more than 120 pounds per day for several months, then, decrease slightly over the following months.
- * We have made great strides in nutrition and care of our domestic animals, however, we have also changed the way nature intended these animals to grow and exist. Some of this change is good, (a lot of nutritional benefits), but some of the change has had negative effects including:
 - Hot house animals that are prone to illness
 - Colics in horses from starch overload
 - Problem animals from not getting enough "turn out time"
 - Cribbing animals from not getting enough forage
- Horses must have clean, fresh water free choice. Free choice means all of the time. The water is important for the digestive system and general health of the animal.

FEEDING KNOW-HOW:

The Fundamentals - The chewed food, forage or feed, passes from the horse's esophagus into its stomach. The stomach only holds about 2-4 gallons of ingested food. This is an EXTREMELY SMALL STOMACH considering the total size of the animal —adults over 1000 pounds! However, nature intended the horse to continually eat so the stomach fills quickly and empties quickly. Mother Nature says it's not a good thing to feed horses more than five pounds of grain at a time, as the horse cannot handle a lot of food at one time. More feedings at fewer pounds per meal is a good thing. The stomach releases acids and enzymes that break down some of the proteins and soluble sugars. The food then passes into the small intestine, which is 70 feet long in the adult horse. There are a lot of problems that can happen in this area. The small intestine has many bends and twists that can lead to digestive upsets. A lot of the carbohydrates are digested and absorbed in this area. The food then enters the

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Horse Talk continued

cecum, which is about three feet long and holds about seven gallons of food. Material moves to the large colon that is about ten to twelve feet long and holds about fifteen gallons of material. Fermentation occurs in these areas. The fermentation takes place because the lower gut houses a large microbial population. These "bugs" go to work on the structured carbohydrates (plant fibers) and convert a large proportion of the fiber to calories (energy) for the horse to expend. It is critical to note that— THIS AREA IS DESIGNED FOR THE BREAKDOWN OF PLANT FIBERS — NOT FOR STARCHES. Fiber feeding is important for the health of the horse and a side benefit is that the horse can produce it's own energy from a good fiber program. The food then enters the small colon where the feces are formed, and eventually exits at the rectum. Total digestive time is 24 to 72 hours. This is a rather unique digestive system. Cows, sheep and other ruminating animals have their fermentation areas before the small intestine, the horse and only a few other animals ferment their feeds after the small intestine.

What's In That Feed? How Do I Feed? Adult mature horses will consume between 1.5% to 2.5% of their body weight in total per day. At least 60%, and the higher the percentage the better, should be from forage (hay and pasture). This will keep their system healthy. The balance of the diet can be "feed" (grain mix and/or pellets). The horse needs to be fed as an individual, as all horses have different rates of metabolism. Some horses are "easy keepers" and may only need one or two pounds of grain mix per day, others may need 10 pounds per day. Always, BE SURE THAT 60% OF THE DIET IS FORAGE. For example, a 1000 pound horse would eat about 15 - 20 pounds of hay per day, and about 4-5 pounds of grain per day, depending on body condition of the animal. A very hard working horse may consume 3% of their body weight per day, but 60% should still be in the form of forage. Six-month-old foals may eat 1% of their body weight per day from forage, and up to 2.5% from grain. Yearlings & two-year-olds will eat about 1.5% of their body weight from forage, and 1.5% from grain. Once again, every animal is an individual. Don't grow them FAT. Sudden weight gains and growth spurts can cause all sorts of joint problems. In summary, if you do not provide the proper nutrition to your horse, dog, cat or any animal, you will not achieve the full genetic potential and growth of the animal. If there is something lacking in the diet, the animal will begin to metabolize or cannibalize its own flesh or tissue to survive. Weight loss, poor performance and poor health are the results of improper feeding. We have the technology to improve things, why not use it?

THE CLASSIC AT DEVON AND THE HORSE AND PONY SHOW

Moyer & Son, Inc. was chosen to feed the recent *Classic at Devon* and the immediately following *Horse and Pony Show*. Both shows were enjoyed by more than 500 attendees over the course of the 4-day event.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Question: I have several 8-year old horses that normally weigh about 1,200 pounds, but appear to have lost considerable weight during the past 3 months. I have not changed my feeding program, what could be wrong?

Answer: If you have eliminated health, teeth and worming as a potential problem, then you should look to your feeding program as possible suspect. Normally, loss of weight is attributed to lack of calories (energy). The cause can often be a change in hay quality. The hind gut of a horse contains a bacterial population that have the ability to convert hay to energy. The better the hay, the more the energy potential (also, the more protein). We would be happy to test your hay so that you know what you are feeding and can adjust your feeding program accordingly.

Question: Tell me about Automatic Delivery--how do I get on this schedule?

Answer: It's easy. Just call our Customer Service at 800-345-0419 and let us know what, when and where. We'll take care of the rest.

Have a horse question? E-mail us at equinelife@emoyer.com

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