

## Feeding Horses Prone To Gastric Ulcers

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As you probably know, gastric ulcers are common in performance horses. Researchers estimate that well over three-quarters of all performance horses are afflicted. Don't be fooled into thinking that a horse with gastric ulcers are easily identifiable without your veterinarian performing a gastroscopy, as horses can have ulcers without showing outward signs. In surveys done on racehorses, researchers have found over 90% of the horses have ulcers, but less than half of them actually show the classic outward signs.

The high incidence of ulcers in performance horses results, in part, from the way these horses are fed and managed. Large grain meals and extended periods of fasting lead to excessive gastric acid output without adequate saliva protection, paving the way for ulcer formation.

The buffering capacity of feed and forage is an essential component in the prevention of gastric ulcers in horses. One of the easiest ways to keep your horse ulcer-free is through the liberal feeding of forage through hay and pasture. Lucerne is an appropriate hay/chaff choice as research suggests that the type of hay fed to horses has a significant impact on acid neutralization and the incidence of gastric ulcers with lucerne being superior to grass-based hay. However, even horses with full access to pasture and hay can develop gastric ulcers!

Beyond a change in forage, you may consider changing to a feed that contains less starch than traditional feeds. Barastoc Complete Performer is moderate-starch, high-fibre muesli-feed that provides the energy for work through the fat, fibre and highly-digestible cooked grains. Barastoc Complete Performer provides excellent value for money as a complete feed it is based on chaff (including lucerne) therefore feeding additional chaff is not required.

Barastoc Complete Performer is ideal for horses prone to Equine Gastric Ulcer Syndrome (EGUS) as it contains a natural equine antacid. A recent study on feeding a proprietary natural mineral supplement to the existing diets of horses showed significant improvement in EGUS scores. Barastoc Complete Performer's combination of high fibre and a natural equine antacid helps neutralize excess gastric acid, protecting the stomach lining and restoring the normal gastric environment.

Using a lower starch feeds such as Barastoc Complete Performer helps reduce hyperactivity and stress, and minimize their effects on stomach health.

It also only requires a 2kg daily feeding rate for the average horse, which helps to decrease meal sizes and avoids the overconsumption of starch.

The inclusion of canola oil within Barastoc Complete Performer helps to supply energy to the horse, reducing the need for additional grains. Oils such as canola oil that have a high omega-6 fatty acid content have been shown to increase prostaglandin secretion and decrease acid production in the stomach. This makes these oil sources the preferred option for horses with gastric ulcers.

Barastoc Complete Performer provides a balanced ratio of omega-3 to omega-6 fatty acids through the inclusion of DHA enriched oil. DHA fatty acids are long chain omega-3 fatty acids which are more available to the horse. Omega-3 fatty acids contain anti-inflammatory properties that benefit joint and immune health.

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