

Nutritional Assistance for the Show Ring

Ensuring your horse is in the optimal condition for the showring is extremely important to all competitors. The need to catch the judge's eye with a healthy shiny coat is great but for a nutritionist having the horse that is both healthy inside and out is extremely important. With the show season nearly upon us, having a horse that is in healthy condition is essential to ensure that they perform at their peak level for the entire show which for some of us may be 10 days.

DIET ANALYSIS

The horse's general wellbeing and health needs to be addressed when preparing an animal for the show ring. The first nutritional review to conduct is to look at the current diet.

Does it have the correct amount of nutrients such as protein, fats, fibre, vitamins and minerals etc for an average healthy horse?

We then need to assess if the horse's current body condition score (BCS) is sufficient, if we want to gain or lose condition. If we want to make a change to the horse's condition we really need to do this gradually over a period of time. A sudden change in diet can easily cause gastric complications. Once we have a basic balanced diet we can then tweak the diet to assist with the key areas. This can be done via the addition of key nutrients. (visit Barastoc to complete a Diet Analysis Review: <http://www.barastochorse.com.au/barastoc-diet-analysis-request/>)

MUSCLE DEFINITION AND TOPLINE

There is often a misconception that topline is just as easy as adding calories and making the horse fat. Topline is the defined shape of a horse that exemplifies an equine athlete.

Topline cannot be developed merely by feeding your horse, it must be accompanied with the right amount of exercise. Protein is the main nutrient requirement for muscle deposition. Higher protein feeds such as Lucerne Hay (20-25%), lupins (28-32%) and Soybean meal (44-48%) are common sources of higher protein feeds commonly used by horse owners.

Proteins are made up of amino acids. Some the horse make themselves, which are called non-essential amino acids and the others which need to be included in the diet are called essential amino acids.

Essential amino acids are extremely important in the development of muscles and also in the development keratinisation of hooves and soft hair growth. Two amino acids of note are Lysine and Methionine. If the body does not have sufficient amounts of these the correct development of the body will not occur and you may find your horse is depositing more fat than muscle.

Fats or Oils play an important role in the development of a show horse. Fats are a cool source of energy which is essential in maintaining a calm performance.

A GLOSSY COAT

Horse owners have recognised for years that supplementing fat to the horse's diet has a positive effect on the horses' coat. Hair itself is made up of protein, minerals and fatty acids, and feeding oils has been shown to alter the fatty acid composition of hair. Fatty acids are also a component of skin oils (sebum) that coat each strand of hair, giving the coat an oily protective barrier and a shiny appearance. Dietary fat facilitates the absorption of the fat soluble vitamins A, D, E and K which also contribute to the appearance of a healthier coat.

Looking after the inside of your horse is just as important as looking after their outward appearance. Functional ingredients such as pre and probiotics which promote the development and stability of beneficial bacteria in the horses gut are just as important. A healthy gastro intestinal tract of the horse will enable the body to efficiently extract nutrients from the diet and will dramatically reduce the risk of gastro intestinal troubles such as colic. When attending shows which can run over a week and also where you may have to travel long distances, having a healthy horse inside is just as important as their outward appearance.

A CONSTANT STATE OF HEALTH

To assist in maintaining your horse in a constant state of health ensure that you keep your horses diet constant. If possible, bring hay from home and if not gradually introduce new hay into their diet. Remember that if your horses are going to be stabled when they are generally grazing you will have to make changes for this to compensate for the lack of grass they will be consuming.

Developing a diet for show horses to enhance coat and condition can be assisted by Barastoc and their nutritionists. Barastoc manufactures well balanced feeds which supply essential nutrients for your animals. If you require that additional performance, Barastoc Groom has been fortified with biotin, zinc and methionine for improved hoof and coat development. Essential fatty acids for improved shine and lustre in the coat accompanied by essential vitamins and minerals to maintain and emphasise a show room shine. Groom also contains pre and probiotics to maintain a healthy horse inside and out.

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Start your horse's inner health journey today.

Visit barastochorse.com.au and make use of our nutrition tools and calculators to find the right diet for your horse.