



Don't wait until spring..... tailor your mare's nutrition now for a sound, healthy foal

It's hard to imagine in the depths of winter that before we know it, the sun will be shining and our foal we've been waiting for will be here! Your prized performance mare has retired, you've selected the best stallion, she's been successfully bred, and now the waiting game is on. It's easy to think that most of the hard work has been done, however a healthy mare and foal doesn't happen by chance. Now is the time to ensure they're getting some vital nutritional care so that the foal can be given the best chance to grow sound and strong.

STAGE 2 - POST PREGNANCY

MARES WITH FOALS AT FOOT

Once your foal is on the ground, the well-fed mare will provide them with all vital nutrition through their milk. Mare's feed requirements will increase significantly during lactation, often requiring 3 times as much feed than in early pregnancy. Feeding high quality forage and a full breeding feed is a good idea during this important phase, unless the mare is a good-doer in which case a balancer should meet requirements without the calories.

Foals will nurse very frequently in the early weeks and begin to nibble on grass and their mother's feed within a few weeks. The difference between what the foal needs and what the mare's milk provides will occur around 3 months of age, so at this stage it is a good idea to introduce the foal's own feed. Depending on the body condition of the foal and the grass available, this could be as little as a small about of a balancer pellet, such as Barastoc Stud Balancer, or a small meal of a full breeding feed such as Breed N Grow.



horses come first

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WEANLINGS

After weaning, it is common practice to turn foals out for a length of time to grow on and mature. Please don't forget about their nutrition during this time – the period between weaning and 12-18 months is a really significant window for the onset of several developmental diseases affecting bone and joint development, which can go on and hinder their future soundness. Nutrition, especially deficiencies and imbalances, have a role to play in the onset of these diseases. Weanlings, even when turned out, still need a balanced feed or supplement on a daily basis to give them the best possible chance of growing strong, sound bones and joints.

A feed in the Barastoc stable which is ideal for paddock feeding is Low GI Cube – the larger style cube is easily picked up from the ground by the young horse, and its formulation provides all the important protein, vitamins and minerals for the growing horse in a safe, high-fibre, and tasty cube. Low GI Cube is ideal for weanlings as research has shown that feeds with lower glycaemic energy sources, such as the digestible fibre found in Low GI may be beneficial in preventing the onset of osteochondrosis, one of the more debilitating developmental cartilage diseases. Low GI cube also has the added advantage of containing an ingredient called BMC which is research-proven to increase bone mineral content in weanlings.

It's important that weanlings are not allowed to get too fat, which can easily happen especially if turned out on good pasture. In these cases, it is a good idea to monitor their body condition regularly to ensure you can see the last rib. If they are getting too porky, you can meet nutrition requirements by feeding Barastoc Stud balancer.

YEARLINGS AND BEYOND

The goal during the period from 12 months of age is to still provide a balanced diet while monitoring body condition. High quality fibre, balanced protein, vitamins and minerals are still key to ensure these young bodies are given the best chance for optimal growth and development. Breeding feeds such as Barastoc Breed N Grow, Barastoc Low GI Cube, or Barastoc Stud balancer are suitable and recommended for all young stock up until about 3-4 years of age, by which they can safely transition onto a feed more suited to their profession. In summary, targeting nutrition of the mare in the winter months can lead to a successful breeding season.

Nutrition can play a significant role in the health and productivity of both mares and their offspring. Barastoc has a wide range of feeds which have been scientifically designed to provide the best nutrition to your mare, whether dry, pregnant or lactating, as well as your growing foal and young athlete. We offer higher calorie feeds for those poor doers (Barastoc Breed N Grow, Barastoc Low GI Cube), high quality fibre sources for when pasture is limited (Fibre Beet), and low intake perfectly balanced supplements for the good-doers who don't need the calories (Barastoc Stud Balancer). As with all horses, it is highly recommended to seek the guidance of a qualified equine nutritionist to tailor a balanced diet for your horse's individual needs.