

## Feeding Your Stallion for Double Duty

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The mantra for the Australian Stock Horse is the Breed for Every need and it is very evident that the stallions constantly feature at the top of the list in results. It is not uncommon to have over one hundred stallions competing at the larger campdrafts. So the question is often asked of these performance stallions, do I feed them as a performance horse or as a breeding animal?

The breeding stallion generally has an increased nutrient requirement of around 25% more than the sedentary stallion during a non-breeding season. An Australian Stock Horse performance stallion can have between 25 – 50% increase in nutrient requirements depending upon workload and metabolism.

Feeding your performance stallion correctly during breeding season is extremely important. A result of an imbalance diet can be injury and reduced performance in relation to the performance side of his activity, as well as reduced fertility and conception rates in relation to the breeding side.

### Assessing your stallions condition

Assessing your stallion's condition score is extremely important both for performance and fertility. An animal that has a condition score that is too high will be carrying additional weight that can affect its performance and increase the load on joints. Similarly the stallion that is under weight and has a low condition score may not have sufficient energy reserves to perform and continue to perform at a high level. Also this type of condition score may reduce fertility, semen motility and conformation. For stallions that tend to loose condition during breeding season it may be wise to slowly increase their condition score over the winter months to avoid trying gain weight on your stallion whilst breeding and performing them. For a condition score chart please go to [www.barastochorse.com.au](http://www.barastochorse.com.au) where you can also estimate your horses weight.

As horses digestive systems evolved eating large amounts of roughage it is essential to base any diet on a high roughage base. Essentially I would expect to see at least 1% but preferably 1.5% of your stallion's body weight of roughage per day included in his diet. This would equate to around 7.5kg per day of hay / chaff and or pasture. Having a good sound roughage base for your stallions diet will assist in maintaining a healthy gastro intestinal tract and assist in reducing gastric complications such as colic.

## Are all feeds the same?

Filling in gap from roughage to meet your stallion's nutrient requirement depends on a many factors such as weight, workload, condition score and workload. It is important if you are feeding a prepared feed to ensure you feed the advised feeding rate as these have been formulated to meet your horse's requirement at these rates. If for example your stallion is receiving 1-2kg of additional feed per day I would suggest a concentrate feed such as Barastoc Legend as this has been formulated to meet your horses requirement at a lower inclusion rate. If you are feeding your stallion 3-5kg per day we would suggest looking at feeds such as Barastoc Cool Command which is a non-oat muesli feed with added superfibres. An alternative in pelleted form is Barastoc Breed n Grow.

With more focussed research on fertility in stallions several key nutrients have been focussed on the assist with fertility and recovery of stallions.

The diet of a performance stallion needs to ensure that essential amino acids are present in sufficient amount to assist in normal metabolism but also to assist in recovering from strenuous performance and maintain fertility functions.

Electrolytes are often forgotten but a deficiency in electrolytes that control the contraction and release of muscles during performance both in the arena and in the breeding barn can lead to reduced performance and injury.

Antioxidants such as Vitamin E and Selenium in combination with Omega 3 essential fatty acids have dual roles in the body as protecting the body from oxidative and inflammation stress as a result of metabolism and activity but research has also shown that these types of antioxidants have improved sperm count, sperm conformation and longevity. This can result in fewer serves per conception meaning your stallion does not have to work as hard and reduces his risk of injury. Also research has shown that diets with adequate amounts of these ingredients such as the Barastoc range can also improve quality and persistence when chilling or freezing semen.

Visit [barastochorse.com.au](http://barastochorse.com.au) and make use of our nutrition tools and calculators to find the right diet for your horse.