



DODSON & HORRELL

ANIMAL HEALTH, NUTRITION AND WELL-BEING

FEEDING SUCCESS

FEEDING THE COMPETITION HORSE

All you need to know

An adult horse in intense training can require up to double the energy of a horse at maintenance. Combined with an increased requirement for protein and certain vitamins, minerals and electrolytes, this means that the nutritional management of competition horses can be very different to horses at rest.

Supply the right amount of calories:

- The most important part of your horse's diet is forage. Horses should consume at least 1.5% of their body weight per day in forage - having your forage tested can help you to plan your horse's diet
- In the early part of a training plan forage paired with a moderate energy feed such as Pasture Mix should provide all your horse's calorie requirements
- As training progresses and your horse's workload increases you may need a higher energy feed such as Competition Mix, Staypower Muesli/Cubes or Elite Sport Muesli
- Your horse requires enough energy to perform, however overfeeding can have a negative impact – for every additional 10kg of weight your horse has to work 3.3% harder
- Feeding excess energy can lead to excess fat, which places more load on tendons and joints, but feeding insufficient energy can leave your horse without the energy reserves they need to compete
- It is essential to monitor your horse's weight using a scientifically validated weigh tape and fat score your horse every fortnight; you should aim for a fat score of 2.5 - 3 out of 5
- Our Nutritional Advisors can advise you on the most appropriate feed for your horse's workload

Meet increased demand for protein:

- Meeting your horse's protein requirement is crucial for the growth and repair of muscles, in order to develop power, strength, topline and to prevent injury
- Your horse can make around half of the amino acid 'building blocks' of protein in their body, but the rest must be supplied in their diet
- Key amino acids such as lysine and methionine are important for recovery and can be found in all of our performance feeds
- For horses who are good doers our Ultimate Balancer is a great source of essential amino acids

Call us now for expert nutritional advice: **01270 782223**



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Top Tip: Using our scientifically validated weigh tape at an event can help you detect weight loss caused by dehydration, allowing you to rehydrate your horse and maximise performance!

Feed according to your horse's temperament and discipline:

- Some horses are naturally excitable, whilst some are laid back and could do with a bit more 'oomph'
- Nutrition cannot change your horse's natural temperament but can be used to provide extra sparkle or to avoid exacerbating natural excitability
- Starches and sugars from cereals provide fast-release energy. Cereal-based feeds such as Competition Mix and Competition Cubes are a useful source of 'fast-release' energy if your horse needs a bit more 'oomph', or if you are competing in shorter-duration disciplines such as show-jumping
- Oils and fibre provide 'slow-release' energy that gives stamina and endurance without excitability. Staypower Muesli and Staypower Cubes are high in fibre and oil but lower in starch, so are perfect for excitable horses or those that are eventing or endurance racing

Check levels of vitamins and minerals:

- Vitamins and minerals are important for all aspects of performance from energy utilisation to hoof quality. Just a few examples are:
 - ✓ Calcium - bone strength
 - ✓ Antioxidants - help to 'mop-up' free radicals
 - ✓ B-vitamins - support appetite and energy utilisation
- Many horses receive less than the recommended amounts of micronutrients due to reduced feeding amounts in an attempt to control behaviour or energy intake
- If your horse is receiving less than the recommended amount of concentrate feed it is important to top up the diet with either a balancer or vitamin and mineral supplement

Combat dehydration and replace lost electrolytes:

- Horses that sweat have increased requirements for electrolytes sodium, chloride and potassium which are lost in sweat

- Our research shows that event horses can lose a certain percentage of body weight through dehydration in each phase:
 - ✓ Up to 3% in dressage phase
 - ✓ Up to 4% in the cross country phase
 - ✓ Up to 0.5% for every hour travelled
- Just 2% body weight loss can adversely affect your horse's performance!
- Rehydration is crucial to recovery after exercise; allow your horse frequent small amounts of fresh water immediately after exercise, then let them drink freely once they have cooled off
- If your horse refuses to drink try adding a small amount of fruit juice or cordial to the water to mask any unusual flavours
- Providing electrolytes after exercise will speed up recovery, either in a small amount of wet feed or in water
- Adding an electrolyte supplement provides an isotonic oral rehydration solution for your horse

Recommended feeds:

All feeds in our Performance range are fully balanced and include chelated minerals, electrolytes and provide key amino acids to support muscle health and development

- Competition Mix and Cubes** - Traditional grain based, fast-release energy feeds to provide power and performance to support horses competing
- Staypower Muesli and Cubes** - An oat-free, lower starch performance feed providing a controlled release of energy for stamina and performance
- Elite Sport Muesli** - A high performance, low starch and sugar feed that provides a slow-release of energy for stamina and performance. Containing additional ingredients to support digestive health
- Performance Concentrate Muesli** - A low intake muesli with additional support supplements for the performance horse. Provides a concentrated source of nutrition for good doers, or can be used to balance out oats
- Fibre Performance** - A fibre based muesli for performance horses, with no need to add chaff

Please visit our website, get in touch via social media or call: **01270 782223**

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