



In This Issue

April 2010

Eastern Cape Testimonial	1
60% of horses still affected by ulcers	2
Equus expands in the Eastern Cape	2
Useful tips on buying hay	2

In our Next Issue

Important points to keep in mind when selecting a concentrate and how your choice can affect the incidence of ulcers.

EASTERN CAPE TESTIMONIAL

Our two ponies 'Foxy' and 'Alfie' have had a good beginning to the year at the PE Autumn Show, the Bathurst Show and the East London Agricultural Show.

At the **PE Autumn Show** BB Foxglove won the Show Pony, Show Riding Pony, Show Hunter, Working Championship Pony, Champion Show Pony, and Supreme Show Horse/Pony as well as the Dressage Elementary Medium 3, while Olford Fantastic won the Dressage Elementary 3.

At the **Bathurst Show** BB Foxglove won the Dressage Elementary 2 and 3, Best Pony under 13.3hands, Best Pony in hand, Show Pony, Open Champion Pony, Graded Champion Pony, Supreme Champion Pony and Supreme Horse/Pony on show. Olford Fantastic also had 4 placings in the showing classes.

At the **East London Agricultural Show**, BB Foxglove with Raine was the Reserve Champion Lead Rein Pony, while with Brinleigh in the saddle, 'Foxy' was Dressage Champion of the Show, was 1st in the Working Riding Pony, was Show Pony Champion and was the Supreme Eastern Cape Champion. 'Alfie' won the Best Pleasure Pony class and was Arab Champion as well.

Both our ponies are on **Cool'nPerform 12** and at Bathurst Hannah gave us this great advice and we used a bit of **Race'n Replace** to give Foxy a bit of sparkle when he was tired.

We bought Foxy in June 2009 and when I first saw him I was a bit thrown by his dull coat. I thought at the time that it was from over-clipping or too much sun. I kept him on the feed he had been on in JHB (not available to us in PE) and very slowly changed him to our normal brand but was still not happy with his coat and his general well being. He then had two low grade colics close together and after a lot of research I came to the conclusion that Foxy had an ulcer for which he was then treated. At this time **Equus** became available in PE and seemed to be the right feed for ulcers. I decided to move my whole yard over to **Equus Cool and Perform 12** after being on a local brand for 11 years.

As Hannah will tell you it took a while to convince me of the real benefits. It took a while to switch them over as the Equus product was so completely different, but eventually all the horses munched away happily. Foxy's coat is now glowing with health and he is a very happy boy. I have not had a colic or health problem in the yard since we changed to Equus. Using Equus certainly saves on supplements, quantities and vet bills. All my horses are looking great despite the terrible drought.

Kind Regards, Sharon , Brinleigh , Raine , Olford Fantastic and Foxglove



Olford Fantastic



Foxglove (Foxy)

Equine stomach ulcers still at 60%

According to a press release in the USA dated 16 April 2010 Equine stomach ulcers remain a threat to horses. The edited Merial press release reads as follows:

For the second year, a nationwide series of more than 160 gastroscopy events showed 60% of horses were identified with stomach ulcers.

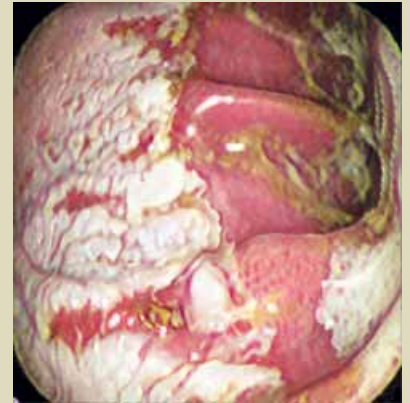
"This is the second year that these scopings were able to show horse owners the type of potentially painful stomach ulcers that their horses have been dealing with," said April Knudson, DVM, manager of Merial Veterinary Services. "Many times horses are suffering in silence from stomach ulcers due to their natural tendencies as a prey animal to mask pain."

Veterinarians evaluated the horses' stomachs using gastroscopy. Throughout the year, 1,532 horses across the country participated. Overall, 922 horses from 37 states had some ulceration as identified by gastroscopy.

There are many triggers for stomach ulcer development, and stress is an important factor, Knudson said. Horses may experience stress when exposed to such situations as competition, training, travel, lay-up due to sickness or injury, shows or events, limited turnout or grazing, and trailering.

Ulcers can develop quickly, too. One study showed that horses can develop stomach ulcers in as little as five days.

Although these are figures from the USA, we in South Africa should take note of these and be informed on the best practices for preventing ulcers!



Equus expands in the Eastern Cape

Having been successfully established in Port Elizabeth for 9 months, Equus has now established outlets in both Port Alfred and East London. Handy Horse Feeds supplies Port Alfred and surrounds while Kei Seeds and Feeds in East London services the surrounding coast and up to Queenstown.

Port Elizabeth

Feed & Seed

Shop 4 Mount Pleasant Centre,
Port Elizabeth
Tel 041 368 5338 / 084 223 3417
Fax 041 368 5338

Port Alfred/Bathurst/ Grahamstown and surrounds

H'Andy Horse Feeds

35A Shaw Park Road,
Kleinemonde (2km off the R72)
Tel Helen Grapes 083 564 0285
/ 046 675 1919

East London

Kei Seeds & Feeds

Building 31(3), Arcadia Park Complex
Commercial Road, Arcadia,
East London
Tel 043 743n3731/2
Fax 043 743 3749

Getting the most hay for your money

With winter fast approaching and bales of hay rolling in from the fields on the back of farmers' wagons, it's once again time to start staking your claim so that your hayloft remains full over the coming winter months.

The value of good quality hay is often completely underestimated and the challenge of meeting your horse's protein and energy requirements should actually begin with buying quality hay even before selecting a concentrate.

A mature horse will eat 2 to 2.5% of its body weight a day and for optimum health nutritionists recommend that at least half of this should be in the form of roughage. Ideally, however, even hard working horses should not receive more than 1% of body weight in concentrates per day. This means that only 40% of the diet will be concentrated feed and 60% will be roughage, yet most people spend very little time on selecting the best hay available which actually forms the bulk of the diet.

Hay generally falls into one of three categories namely grasses, legumes or cereals.



Legume hay, like lucerne, is higher in protein, energy, calcium and Vitamin A than grass and cereal hays but is also more expensive and needs to be correctly balanced with the rest of the diet. Grass hays most commonly used in South Africa are teff and eragrostis and the most commonly used cereal hay is oaten hay. While hay alone may not meet the total dietary requirements of young, growing horses or those used for high levels of performance, high-quality hay may supply ample nutrition for less active adult horses.

Horse owners often wonder whether they should be buying grass, legume or cereal hay and the answer in terms of value for money can often be complex. The nutritional requirements of horses depend largely on age, production status (pregnant, lactating etc), metabolism differences as well as the level of work required. Any of these factors can influence one's choice of hay, but the most influential variable of all is what kind of good quality hay is regularly available in your area at competitive prices. The transport of hay over long distances is costly as generally less than 60% of the maximum weight of haulers can be loaded due to the bulkiness of the product. It is therefore more cost effective to buy the best quality of the type of hay locally available in your area at good prices and then to address the nutritional shortages by selecting the correct concentrate.

Once you've determined the type of hay offering the best value for money in your area, the following tips will be helpful in evaluating the quality aspects of the hay:

- Do not worry about slight discoloration on the outside, especially in stacked hay -its what's inside that counts. Have several bales opened so you can evaluate the hay inside the bales.
- Choose hay that is as fine-stemmed, green and leafy, and soft to the touch as possible. We like our hay to be green in colour, but that should not be our only criteria for judging hay quality. Naturally green hay is usually high in vitamin A and protein content. A dark brown color is a sign that the hay was heat-damaged, which may cause mould. Light brown hay that rates high in all other factors is acceptable. It has been exposed to the sun for too long and has bleached, but this does not harm the hay except for losing some vitamin A content.
- Smell the hay. The aroma should be fresh and sweet. If it smells musty or mouldy then the hay was not cured or stored properly and mould is present. Mould will appear as a grayish-white dust when the bale is slapped, or as a white flaky substance in tightly packed sections of the bale. Mould can make horses sick and mouldy hay should thus not be fed.
- Select hay that has been harvested when the plants are in early bloom for legume hay, or before seed heads have formed in grasses. Examine the leaves, stems, flowers or seed pods to determine the level of maturity. An abundance of leaves and lack of seed heads is best. The leaves hold the most nutrition and therefore have the most food value for the horse and, in addition, horses usually find it most palatable.
- There should be no foreign material in your hay. Look closely for insects, weeds (which can be poisonous), and trash. There should be no sticks, wire, or any other trash in the hay
- Bales that seem excessively heavy for their size or feel warm to the touch should be rejected as they could contain excess moisture that could cause mould, or worse, spontaneous combustion.
- When possible, purchase and feed hay within a year of harvest to preserve its nutritional value.
- When buying in quantity, consider having the hay analysed by a certified forage laboratory to determine its actual nutrient content.
- Discard any hay with evidence of dead mice, rabbits, etc in order to avoid botulism.
- As far as possible avoid buying hay at a fixed price per bale and rather insist on buying per kg or ton of weight. Somehow the average weight of the bales is never what it is promised to be.
- If you have adequate storage facilities, buy hay early on in the season (Jan to March). Later during the winter season prices can easily double and by then the best quality hay has gone.
- Store hay in a dry, sheltered area out of the rain or cover in the stack to protect it from the elements.

Remember that horses at different ages and stages of growth, development and activity have different dietary requirements. Consult your veterinarian or a qualified equine nutritionist when formulating your horse's ration to assist you in determining a balanced diet that is safe, nutritious and cost-effective.