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Best Wishes from the Equus Team for a very happy Festive Season and a Wonderful 2012!

Give your horse a chance to self-regulate his feeding

Your horse's mental state affects his entire body, making a holistic perspective all the more important when it comes to feeding.

An article written by Dr. Juliet Getty points out that when fed a small amount of hay, horses will likely eat it very quickly and will be anxious for more. But if given all they want, they will overeat for a few days and then, once they see that they can walk away and that the hay will still be there when they return, they will calm down and eat only what they need to maintain health.

If your horse is stalled at night, the only way to know whether he has enough hay for this self-regulation to take place is for some hay to be left over in the morning.

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Testimonial from Claire Macintosh

I have an elderly thoroughbred mare, Katya, who is in her 30s. For years she has been a retired "paddock ornament" out in the herd, enjoying the balance of her very long life.

Last winter she started to feel her age. She battled to keep her weight up, would colic about twice a week, and was looking terrible. For a horse of her age who had previously had a colic op, we were very worried about her.

She had almost no teeth left and could not eat grass at all. She had been fed food specifically made for older horses for well over 7 years, supplemented with chopped lucerne and probiotics, but this did not seem to be doing the job anymore. We started changing from one 'old' horse food to another, and tried barley, full fat soya, multi-vitamins and anything the vet and feed suppliers suggested. Nothing seemed to help.

In March this year, we noticed that she was dropping condition quite drastically and she had started to separate herself from the herd. We made the decision to put her down, but had to wait a while until the AHS had died down as the lion and rhino parks were full and could not take more horses.

As a result of having to wait, we stopped all the fancy, expensive 'old' horse feeds, stopped all supplements, stopped the lucerne and chaff, and even stopped the probiotics and multi-vitamins. Katya was fed exactly what all my other horses were being fed - **Equus Train 'n Leisure** - nothing else.

Needless to say, she made a complete turn-around! She picked up weight, joined the herd again, and is completely back to her old, cheeky, chestnut mare self. She also has not had a colic at all since being fed Train 'n Leisure.

I must thank Equus for making *all* my horses look and feel great and for giving my old lady a second chance.

The two pictures show Katya in February this year (top) and the other a pic taken this week. (below)

Many regards
Claire Macintosh

Free Consultation Service!

For an absolutely free consultation with no further obligation contact our professional consultants to schedule a visit to your yard. The visit will include individual assessments of condition and first hand advice and discussion on issues relating to digestive health and general management and will be followed up with individual diet recommendations.

Hannah – 073 423 5491,
Helen – 083 998 6824,
info.equus@driehoek.co.za

Also available on request to interested groups we offer power point presentations on topics related to digestive health, colic, gastric ulcers etc all tailored to suit the group's request.



Katya Before – Feb 2011



Katya After – Dec 2011

Give your horse a chance to self-regulate his feeding from pg. 1

Feeding more hay is not the solution. If you simply feed more, your horses will eat more. The key is to feed enough so that they never run out. Then, and only then, will instincts take over and the vast majority of horses will self-regulate their intake.

To view this article visit:

<http://www.holistichorse.com/Nutrition/feeding-in-sync-with-instincts-produces-good-behavior.html>

The same principle, however, applies to “bucket food”. Some horses, especially those coming from more intensively managed yards, will initially rush their bucket food in anticipation of factors like turnout or removal of the bucket before the grooms leave for the night etc, and may actually eat more than what they need .

After a few weeks, however, once they realize their food will always be there, horses will generally start to slow their eating in order to regulate their body condition, and some may even leave a proportion of food once full. Often this is mistaken for a horse that is not “enjoying their food” anymore.

Reducing the amount of food at this point will usually result in the horse once again eating all the food given. Alternatively, allowing the horse the entire evening to eat his feed will often also result in all food being consumed.

Horses are designed to eat little and often, so a slow eater is never a bad thing, and often will result in a “good doer”.

Be careful with Ponies

At the recent Equine Science Society meeting held in July 2011, Annette Longland, Ph.D., presented the results of three studies that investigated pasture intake by ponies. These results provide more insight into the way ponies are managed, particularly in controlling their appetites and their predisposition to laminitis.

The researchers were able to verify something horsemen have known for a long time: ponies can eat a lot of grass. Previous estimates and commonly accepted intakes of pasture for mature horses have been 1.5–2.0% of body weight, with higher intakes estimated for growing, pregnant, and lactating horses.

The average intake for the ponies however was 3.8% of body weight. During the six weeks, the ponies gained an average of almost 1 kg per day, indicating that at these levels of intake they were not eating just to meet their energy requirement; they were eating to exceed it. It seems therefore ponies must have their food and forage intake regulated through proper management to avoid issues related to excessive body weight.

In looking for ways to control the intake of the ponies and to keep them from gaining weight, two methods were studied - restricting access and muzzling.

To learn more about this visit:

http://www.equinews.com/article/revelations-about-ponies-and-pastures?utm_so

