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Prices reduced on selected Equus Products!!

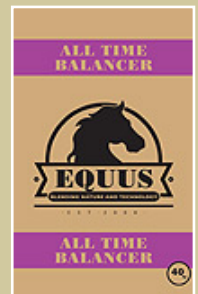
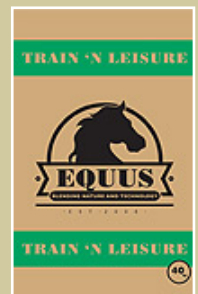
Locally produced maize remains the main price driver of many local ingredients and with a record crop expected, some of these have dropped considerably in price.

Both **Equus Train 'n Leisure** and **Nice 'n Easy** will decrease in price by R8.00/40kg bag from 1 June, while the **All Time Balancer** will drop by R20.00 /40kg bag. The **Cool 'n Perform** price is not affected as increases in the price of other specialized ingredients balances out the decrease in others.

For those worried about getting through this winter on a tight budget, **Equus Train 'n Leisure** offers without a doubt the best value for money as the most specialised pelleted product on the market today. With the exception of certain medical conditions, horses using **Train 'n Leisure** require no additional oils or supplements. Stretch your budget in winter even further by incorporating the **Equus Nice 'n Easy** especially where work loads are not that high and where poor quality hay needs to be boosted.

Contact *Hannah Rousell (MSc Equine Science)* on 073 423 5491 or info@equusfeeds.co.za to discuss your winter feeding programme.

(See *Train 'n Leisure Testimonial* on page 5)



Is your horse displaying Attitude Problems?

Is he refusing jumps, acting up for no reason, kicking in the trailer, pinning his ears back when you put your leg on?

When a normally well behaved horse starts acting strangely by demonstrating any or all of the behaviors described above you may want to think twice before assuming he has an attitude problem. Your horse may be displaying the typical equine symptoms of ulcers.

Recent studies indicate that up to 93% of race horses, at least 60% of horses in other competitive disciplines, 37% of pleasure horses and up to 57% of foals have stomach ulcers. Interestingly, 50% of horses with ulcers show no outward signs of gastrointestinal disease.

How to tell if a horse has stomach ulcers?

The classic signs of ulcers in the adult horse are:

- poor appetite
- decreased performance
- attitude changes
- poor body condition
- continually fluctuating body weight
- rough and dull hair coat
- low-grade or repeated colic episodes.
- Crib biting.
- generally ill tempered behaviour
- response to treatment

The classic signs in foals are:

- colic
- diarrhea
- teeth grinding
- salivation and crib biting
- poor body condition
- response to treatment



Temperament and pain tolerance can determine whether or not an individual horse shows clinical signs. Some horses with mild lesions show obvious and “classic” clinical signs while others with more serious lesions may show very little sign of a problem. If your horse is in training, the chances are high that it has stomach ulcers even if symptoms seem to be absent. Often it is clear only in hindsight after treatment results in improved attitude, condition, or performance. In fact, by the time obvious symptoms appear, stomach ulcers may be advanced and more difficult to treat. So if in doubt rather suspect ulcers until proven otherwise.

Why do Ulcers develop?

The bacterial cause of ulcers that has been determined to be such an important causative factor in human gastric ulcers has not been found to date in horses. The most common reasons for equine ulcers developing include:

- Infrequent meals
- Poorly designed high starch meals coupled with inadequate access to hay or pasture.
- Heavy training schedules in high stress environments.
- Excessive use of drugs, especially non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

It is important to note that often these conditions can lead to stomach ulcers within days. Performance horses often go without feed several hours of each day during training, permitting acid build-up within the stomach causing more damage. It has also been found that routine administration of electrolytes can cause the formation of equine ulcers.

How to diagnosis of gastric ulcers?

The definitive way to diagnose gastric ulcers is through the use of a 3-meter endoscope, a procedure requiring a qualified Vet. Research on a blood test for equine ulcers that measures sucrose levels in the blood is currently in process. Right now, this test is not yet available. Should cost or availability prohibit use of the endoscope, there are other good options available:

- Discuss the issue with your Veterinarian. Certain symptoms strongly suggest ulcers in which case you can decide upon a method of treatment without scoping.
- Improvement after the treatment suggests that the horse did have stomach ulcers but does not mean that the ulcers have healed. Healing usually requires continued treatment for a period of at least a month especially when the horse remains in training.

[continued on pg 3]

Equus expands further in KZN

In addition to Assagay Feeds, Hillcrest (031) 768 1146,
Equus has now expanded in KZN and is also available in
the Midlands from:

Hayshelf, Merrievale (033) 330 2365/083 318 8312

Prevention and Treatment of Equine Ulcers

Eliminating as many risk factors as possible from your horse's life is the best way to prevent ulcers. Some factors such as frequent showing or racing cannot be changed, but other factors such as meal composition and frequency can be managed with small changes to management practices.

If you suspect that your horse has ulcers, there are a number of things that can be done to ameliorate this condition. Horses usually show a great improvement within a few weeks of treatment being started, except in the most severe cases.

Changing management practices is often the easiest and most cost-effective way not only to prevent ulcers, but to treat them as well. Awareness is the key to prevention. The more you know about the syndrome, the better you will be able to manage your horses to avoid it.

Horses, unlike humans, secrete stomach acid continuously and independent of a meal. The presence of food in the stomach buffers this acid and so helps protect the lining from damage. Reducing the acid level in the digestive tract by providing continual forage as well as using a well formulated low starch concentrate goes a long way towards treatment of mild cases of ulcers. Through the use of oils and super fibres modern diets can support high energy requirements without using an unsafe level of grain inclusion.

- The less time a horse spends standing around with an empty stomach, the better. Have grazing and/or hay available continuously.
- Consider the timing of feeding versus training. Do not train on an empty stomach.
- Meal size and frequency of meal size plays a big role in ulcer formation. Large meals produce more acid and will also empty from the stomach more slowly than small meals. When in doubt, rather opt for smaller meals more frequently and also provide enough forage in between feedings in order to help buffer the stomach acids continuously secreted.
- Be on the lookout for subtle signs and be ready to change your management accordingly.
- Consult your equine veterinarian or speak to an equine consultant. He or she can help you to make the right diagnosis and management decisions.

Select your brand of Concentrated Feed carefully

The composition of a concentrate plays a major role in equine ulcer formation because of how it affects saliva production as well as how it affects the acidity in the stomach.

The **Equus** meal style products, **Cool 'n Perform** and **Safe 'n Lite**, are specifically designed to be very voluminous and to be eaten slowly. More chewing is required which produces more saliva which serves as a buffer in the stomach preventing the acidity from dropping dramatically. An equal weight of a poorly designed, high grain ration will only produce half the amount of saliva with increased risk of ulcers.

Equus Safe 'n Lite is the lowest starch concentrate available on the market which still provides a medium level of energy and by temporarily changing horses onto this concentrate can greatly assist in treating mild cases of ulcers.

A word on Lucerne.

A study at Texas A&M University using 24 Quarter Horses showed that feeding lucerne to horses either prevented, or was therapeutic in treating, stomach ulcers. According to Extension horse specialist, Dr. Pete Gibbs, the lucerne buffers acid production.

While it is not advised to feed Lucerne only, all **Equus** products use Lucerne as a fibre base and adding some Lucerne to your roughage portion could go a long way to improving the acid balance in the stomach.



Commercial Products

Changing management practices may not be enough to improve the more severe cases of ulcers. In these cases, commercial ulcer products are often very useful in protecting the digestive tract long enough for it to heal. In addition to these, however, it is important to note that management changes will have to be made in order to prevent ulcers returning.



Summary

In severe cases, equine ulcers can be a very painful problem for horses. In mild cases it is often the "hidden handicapper" where a performance horse simply does not reach his full potential. If in doubt consult your Vet or equine specialist and decide on an appropriate programme for treatment as ulcers can usually be eliminated completely in most cases.

Dealing with Equine Emergencies

Horses need first aid care just as much as people do, if not more, according to Dr. Glennon Mays, clinical associate professor at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences. There are many situations that a horse owner might run into, such as soft tissue injuries like lacerations and puncture wounds, ophthalmic injuries, strains, sprains, other acute lameness issues, colic, fever, depression, and dystocia or foaling difficulties. Horse owners should have the basic skills required to take care of a horse during an emergency situation until a veterinarian is available, especially those in more remote areas.



Dr Mays feels that the minimum competency skill level is comfort with applying a bandage in case of a hemorrhaging lower extremity or understanding how to encourage a painful, recumbent horse to stop rolling and get up off the ground and walk around in a circle while waiting for the veterinarian's arrival in the case of colic. Cooperativeness on the part of the animal to accomplish routine acts can actually be practiced under non-emergency situations in order to succeed in time of crisis.

In the event of emergency, there are a few things that horse owners should have at hand, especially readily accessible emergency phone numbers. In a tense moment, the pre-determined numbers can be dialed in order of preference. In case the first choice is unavailable, secondary or tertiary selections have already been made. Mays also suggests having some bandage materials on hand. Beyond basic leg wrapping techniques, other first aid supplies can vary according to the qualifications of the owner of the horse and the client-patient relationship with the veterinarian.

There are several emergencies that tend to happen frequently to horses. One of the most common involves soft tissue injuries. Since horses are "flight" rather than "fight" responders, punctured, lacerated, or avulsed soft tissues are ordinary reasons for seeking emergency assistance. Another common emergency need is in response to engorgement due to inadvertent duplication at feeding time or inconsistency in feeding time. Introduction of new feed, hay, or grazing sources can create a need for emergency help at times.

Because horses are naturally inquisitive, eye injuries are another common need for immediate assistance. Tearing excessively, squinting the eyelids, unnatural desire to stay inside a shaded area when pasture mates are out grazing are all indications of a possible eye problem. When owners are examining their horse, it's often a good practice to take a look at both sides of the animal no matter how normal one side appears.

"From a veterinarian's point of view, it's very frustrating to be invited to attend an animal situation that has already progressed several days because the owner's decision to provide therapy has proven a mistake," said Mays. "Don't wait too long and always listen to your conscience."

A good idea is to ask a Vet to assist in a small workshop where practical demonstrations of the most common emergencies are demonstrated. Share the cost of a Vet between a group of friends and do it annually in order to stay on top of the procedures.

When Should I Call the Vet?

There is no way to make an entire list of situations of "when to call the veterinarian" in this short space. However, here are some general guidelines.

The presence of uncontrollable bleeding, foreign objects protruding from the body (do not remove them!), lacerations, injury to the eye or eyelids, abdominal pain or diarrhea, aggressive or unusual behavior, neurologic signs, severe or chronic lameness, mares which are actively in labor for more than 20 minutes without progress, and difficulty in breathing are only some of the obvious times to call your veterinarian.

Perhaps the best rule is, when in doubt, call!

All horse owners should know how to take their horse's temperature, pulse, respiration, capillary refill time, and dehydration status. When these basic health parameters are abnormal for an unknown reason, a call to the veterinarian is warranted.

When you have observed your animals over a period of time, you should know immediately when something is out of the ordinary, besides obvious clinical signs such as lameness or nasal discharge.

Multiple animals getting sick at once should raise a red flag. Symptoms in several animals could indicate such dangers as infectious diseases or a toxin in the horses' pasture, water, or feed. A good rule of thumb is, if a child were exhibiting the same symptoms as your horse, would you call the pediatrician?

Proper treatment and diagnosis of a sick horse requires a veterinary/patient interaction. This generally is not the case over the Internet and for a lay person to suggest a diagnosis or treatment for a horse is not sound advice.



Part of the training to become veterinary practitioners is to check multiple organ systems, as there are many diseases with complicated symptoms.

Someone who has a horse with abnormal behavior might not notice or report over the internet that the horse has a yellowish color to its gums. To a veterinarian finding this in a physical examination, this would likely lead to blood work to evaluate the condition of the liver. Liver disease can cause the build-up of substances in the bloodstream causing neurological symptoms.

Specific clinical symptoms are not always unique for a specific disease condition and clinical symptoms often overlap for different diseases.

Although the internet is a useful tool in assisting a lay person with a diagnosis, omitting a critical observation or symptom could lead to a wrong diagnosis made and the wrong medication administered.

Internet readers should therefore remain critical in their reading and not believe everything in print.

Another Satisfied Client

Horizon Horseback Adventures and Safaris

Horizon Horseback Adventures is a riding holiday destination in the Waterberg region of South Africa which has been offering quality horse riding for the last 15 years to an international clientele.

Our horses' health is paramount to the quality of our business and we are proud of their condition and temperament.

For our herd of around 100 horses, **Equus Train 'n Leisure** is our feed of choice in maintaining those standards in a difficult and challenging bush environment. www.ridinginafrica.com

