



BLENDING NATURE AND TECHNOLOGY

MAY 2015

newsletter

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Equus Train 'n Leisure

From May 2015, Equus Train 'n Leisure will be supplied in 40kg bags only. This will be phased in throughout the Johannesburg stores and prices will be adjusted accordingly. Absolutely nothing else has been changed and this product still remains the top quality cube it has always been.



Going Carb free

Can your competition horse really do without sugar and starch?

The answer is 'Yes'! It is completely possible to use a sugar and grain free diet for the working horse, however, the next question is whether one would want to?

There is often a lot of bad press when it comes to grains and sugar. To clarify, this does not refer to naturally occurring sugars such as those present in hay, grass and even straw, which mean that a horse's diet can never be entirely sugar free, but to those added extras such as molasses. For the average horse in healthy condition, sugars and cereal grains are not generally a problem if used in the correct manner. However, overuse of such ingredients can have detrimental effects. Where horses suffer from conditions such as laminitis, insulin resistance, gastric ulcers, fizzy behaviour and even colic, sugars and grains should definitely be avoided.

So if I need to reduce sugars and grains what should be used instead?

The answer is both fats (in the form of oils) and fibre (such as good quality hay, grass, grass cubes, quality chaffs etc). Both these ingredients are capable of providing adequate energy to the working horse and they have the added advantage of also being much healthier for the equine gut. Equus products contain high levels of fats and fibres allowing for easy use of a "low Carb" diet should it be necessary.

Testimonials

Dear Equus

My horse, Wild West, is a 17 hh warmblood gelding who is worked 5 days a week. He competes in 1.00 and 1.10 m show jumping classes. He eats only a small amount of concentrates for his size and his workload. I feed him 1.5 kgs of **Equus Nice 'n Easy** and 1.5 kgs of **Equus Train 'n Leisure** and 800 grams of **Equus All Time Balancer** per day. He is in extremely good condition and has enough energy for work and for shows.

I have found that on the very low NSC values of the Equus range he is never "spooky" and silly. On other brands with high levels of molasses and cereal grains he was extremely difficult to ride and he "spooked" at every opportunity. These low NSC values have made it possible for me to be barefoot for the past 18 months. I have found the quality of the feed to be very consistent; the price of this wonderful feed is also fantastic.

Thank you Equus for a wonderful feed at a price I can afford.

CAITLIN AND WILD WEST



What are the cost implications?

Ingredients such as cereal grains and sugars are generally cheaper and thus many "basic brands", which contain such ingredients, may seem economical but more often than not these feeds need to be fed in larger amounts which results in any price advantage being lost.

When feeding fibre as the base of the diet, it must be of good quality and this may come at a slightly higher price, however, the digestibility of a quality roughage will be much greater which results in the horse receiving more nutrients per kg than from poorer quality roughage. Should a horse have a medical condition, paying a slighter higher price for quality fibre remains preferable to high vet bills.

At Equus, we believe in keeping the gut healthy while maintaining a balance of key nutrients, thus our range is designed to be low in sugars and grains. The **Cool 'n Perform 12%** is ideal for the working horse and sugars and grains are reduced but not excluded completely. Our grain free product, **Safe 'n Lite**, contains only 0.9% sugar, and is a must for horses which need grains and sugars removed almost entirely from their diets. Equus can also assist in tailoring your horse's diet to match his individual needs and your pocket by helping you choose the product most suited for your horse, reducing the need for any added extras.

Diet and Behaviour study

Research into the link between diet and horse behaviour commissioned by Dengie and conducted at Edinburgh University has been published by Applied Animal Behaviour Science – an international journal reporting on the scientific and objective study of the behaviour of animals managed by humans.

"This is fantastic news and means that the study can now be referred to as independent peer-reviewed research, which gives it a much higher level of credibility," said Dengie technical and product development manager Katie Williams. "It will also be used by other researchers carrying out further studies in this field."

The study was conducted last year by project leader Dr Jo-Anne Murray, researcher Louise Bulmer, from Glasgow University (formerly Edinburgh University) and Sebastian McBride, from the University of Cambridge. Although the effect of diet on behaviour had been studied in many species – including humans and rats – very little had been done to explore the link between horses and diet.

Eight mature horses were used in the study, which ran from January to March, at a time when grazing was sparse. They were each kept in light work – taking part in jumping and flat work for five days a week – with daily turnout for between four and six hours at weekends.

Two different diets were fed during this time, both featuring exactly the same amount of energy and based on haylage. One diet was

fibre-based, containing Dengie Alfa-A Molasses Free, with a starch level of 2 per cent, and the other included a cereal-based concentrate mix, with a starch level of 22 per cent, which is typical of a mix.

The horses were divided into two groups and fed each of the diets for 28 days in a crossover-design study. Behaviour was measured throughout as the horses were introduced to new situations and equipment. Heart rate was also measured to monitor stress levels during the tests.

The study showed that, overall, the horses had higher heart rates (indicating higher stress levels) when exposed to new situations when fed a cereal-based concentrate mix compared to when they were given fibre-based feeds.

This suggests that, although high-starch diets are were once considered an effective energy source for humans undertaking increased exercise, they are not necessarily ideal for providing energy for working horses.

Instead, energy might be better provided by feeding good-quality fibre because the study concludes that this type of diet appears to reduce reactivity, making horses easier to handle from the ground.
<http://www.dengie.com/news/leading-scientific-journal-publishes-study/>

Karen Keller

Schooling Success



Karen is a Protea Dressage rider and National Champion, who is highly regarded in her field. When Karen is not schooling her own horses, she spends a lot of time teaching up and coming riders at Kellandstables, as well as at their home yards.

In this new series, Karen will be sharing her schooling “top tips” to help you and your horse in your everyday riding.

This month we look at tips for lengthening the canter

“When I start to train a young horse to lengthen the canter I start on a 20 meter circle at A or C. Once I have established a balanced canter with the horse calm and connected from the inside leg to outside hand, I ask for some lengthened strides on the open half of the circle, I use the closed short side to collect the horse, and this prevents me from over pulling.

Once you have repeated this move several times the horse will start to anticipate this, in a good way, and you can ask for more engagement because the horse is waiting for you and the closed short side is your ally.

Again, once this is successful, I start to make my circle more and more like an oval until my half circle ends up going to B and E. This gives me half a long side of lengthening plus the half circle (which is quite far). Over time I can lengthen down the whole long side with engagement and balance.

For the downward transition, I set the horse up by performing a half – halt, followed by giving with the rein at the end of the long side. This is not only a reward for the horse but it also makes space for the horse’s hindlegs to come under again and change down a gear”

Happy Riding

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For an absolutely free consultation with no further obligation contact our professional consultants to schedule a visit to your yard.

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