

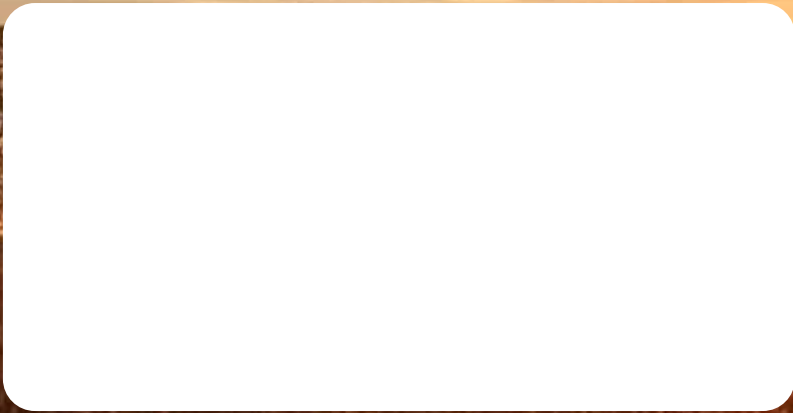
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AGRONOMY & EQUINE EDITOR  
August 2021



1929



SINCE

# TEN WAYS TO STRETCH YOUR HORSE'S HAY SUPPLY

Weather concerns such as winter injury, a cool/wet spring, flooded hay fields and drought can tighten already short hay supplies. Consider these strategies to optimize and stretch your hay supplies.

## 1. DEVELOP A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR HAY SUPPLIER

Find and keep hay suppliers that are trustworthy, communicate well and produce a quality product. A good hay supplier should be, willing to patiently answer questions, stand behind their product and clearly explain their pricing, delivery and storage structure.

Become an educated buyer, be aware of local conditions and prices, and be prepared to buy when the forage is available. Both you and your hay supplier should understand weather conditions and be timely with communications.



## 2. MAXIMIZE PASTURE DURING THE SUMMER

- Using pasture forage costs a third of what it costs to feed hay.
- Establish new pastures and maintain existing pastures by mowing, fertilizing, resting for re-growth, dragging and controlling weeds.
- Consider using annual forages like annual ryegrass to extend the grazing season into the spring and fall.

## 3. PURCHASE HAY BY WEIGHT

Purchase hay by the ton or average bale weight. It can be difficult to estimate bale weight for large round and square bales as the weight varies based on bale density.

Weighing bales can help you accurately calculate annual hay needs. You may be able to weigh hay bales for a fee at most truck stops and gravel pits. You can use bathroom or luggage scales to weigh small square bales.

For instance, a 35-pound square bale sold for \$5 is more expensive (\$286 per ton) than a 50-pound bale sold for \$6 (\$240 per ton).

## 4. BUY A HAY TYPE THAT MATCHES YOUR HORSE'S NEEDS

In general, less mature forages are more nutrient dense than more mature forages.

- Legumes, such as alfalfa, are generally more nutrient dense than cool and warm season grasses.
- A mature grass hay can meet the needs of a pasture companion. Feeding a pasture companion an immature alfalfa hay may result in overspending and horse weight gain.
- Always buy good quality hay with no mold, dust or weeds.
- Buying hay with preservatives, such as propionic acid, is safe for horses and will help limit mold growth in hay.

## 5. HAVE YOUR HAY TESTED FOR QUALITY

Testing your hay will aid in feeding precision. Testing costs around \$25 per sample and results are usually available within a few days. Augusta Co-op will collect and send in the sample for you.

## 6. DO NOT OVER OR UNDER FEED

Most horses should eat 1.5 to 2.5 percent of their bodyweight (BW) in feed (forages plus grains) daily. For example, a 1,000-pound horse should eat 15 to 25 pounds of feed daily. For most horses, at least 75 percent of the daily feed should be forage.

- Most horse owners should target 2 percent BW.
- Owners with easy keepers or overweight horses should target 1.5 percent BW.
- Owners with hard keepers should target 2.5 percent.

Overfeeding can result in excessive horse weight gain, related health issues and wasteful spending. Using these values can help you accurately calculate annual hay needs.

## 7. ALWAYS USE A FEEDER OR NET TO REDUCE HAY WASTE

Thousands of dollars worth of hay are wasted when you don't use a feeder. Feeders can be an investment, but all feeders pay for themselves within one year. Studies have shown:

- When feeding small square bales indoors, you can waste 7 percent of hay without a feeder versus only 1 percent with a feeder.
- When feeding small square bales outdoors, you can waste 13 percent without a feeder versus 1 to 5 percent with a feeder.
- When feeding round bales outdoors, up to 57 percent waste has been reported without a feeder compared to 5 to 33 percent waste with a feeder.

## 8. PROPERLY BALE WRAP AND STORE YOUR HAY

Research found that when harvesting and storing round bales outdoors, dry matter (DM) losses were nearly:

- 20 percent for bales wrapped with sisal twine.
- 11 percent for plastic twine.
- 7 percent for net wrap.
- Minimal losses with B-Wrap®.

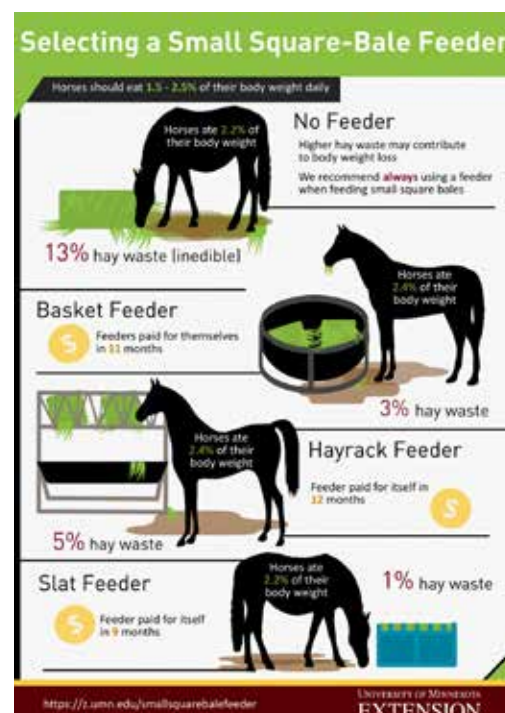
Hay stored indoors will always result in less dry matter loss compared to hay stored outdoors. But not all owners have sufficient indoor storage.

When round bales were stored outdoors without cover, dry matter loss was 7 to 49 percent. Only 2 to 6 percent dry matter was lost when round bales were stored indoors.

### Outdoor storage tips:

- Cover bales with tarps.
- Keep wildlife away from storage areas.
- Store bales on a well-drained surface or pallets.
- Bale or buy a tightly packed bale.
- Use older bales first.

Consider building additional indoor hay storage to reduce losses and to help ride out market swings and the seasonality of hay production. Properly stored hay will keep for several years.





## 9. CONSIDER USING ALTERNATIVE FEEDSTUFFS

Alternative feedstuffs can be economical compared to hay during times of high hay prices. Hay cubes, hay pellets, chopped alfalfa and complete feeds can be used as total replacements for hay, but horses tend to eat these products quickly.

Other fiber sources include rice bran and beet pulp. These feeds cannot fully replace hay, but can be used as partial hay replacements. Whenever you use hay alternatives, work with an equine nutritionist (and your veterinarian if needed).

## 10. CONSIDER REDUCING HERD NUMBERS

Find new homes for horses that no longer meet your goals. A 1,000-pound horse, eating 20 pounds of hay daily, will eat about 7,300 pounds or 3.6 tons of hay annually. If hay is selling for \$300 per ton, that is a cost of \$1,080 annually.

*University of Minnesota Extension*

## Augusta Co-op Solution Augusta, Elite Complete 11:6, Pellet, 50 lbs.

A complete and balanced pellet to meet the needs of mature horses. Contains high quality fiber for a built in fiber source. A good choice for horses that do not have adequate pasture or when hay is in short supply.



SKU - 301501

## CLICK HERE TO FIND HAY SUPPLIERS IN THE VALLEY



Sourcing horse hay from a local grower can be a convenient option. Proximity for delivery and price can be two reasons equine stable managers choose to work with local growers.

Scan here to view a current list of known hay suppliers in the Shenandoah Valley.

(Augusta Co-op does not recommend any specific hay supplier)

<https://www.augustacoop.com/resources/hay-directory/>

## HEALTHY HORSE APP

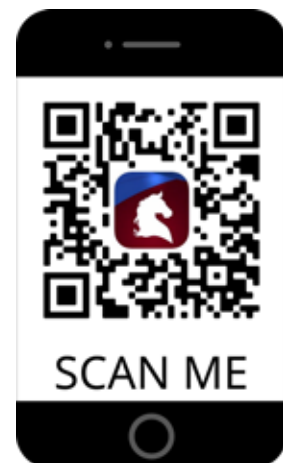
Determining a horse's body weight is important for managing weight and feeding, and for administering medication. The Healthy Horse App allows horse owners and professionals to estimate horse body weight of several breed types by using new equations developed through university research. Simply enter in the horse's height, body length, neck and girth circumference. The app includes the following breed types:

- Adult Arabians / Draft horses / Adult and juvenile miniature horses / Stock horses /Saddle-type horses / Ponies /Warmbloods / Thoroughbreds

Ideal body weight is also calculated for each breed-type using newly developed equations through university research.

The app gives an estimate of the actual and ideal body weights and should not replace an examination by a qualified professional. The Healthy Horse App is now available in both Spanish and English and users can enter measurements in either imperial or metric units with results displayed in either pounds or kilograms.

The app is available for use with Android and Apple products.



<https://qrco.de/HealthyHorse>

# HOW DOES THE EQUINE GI TRACT WORK?

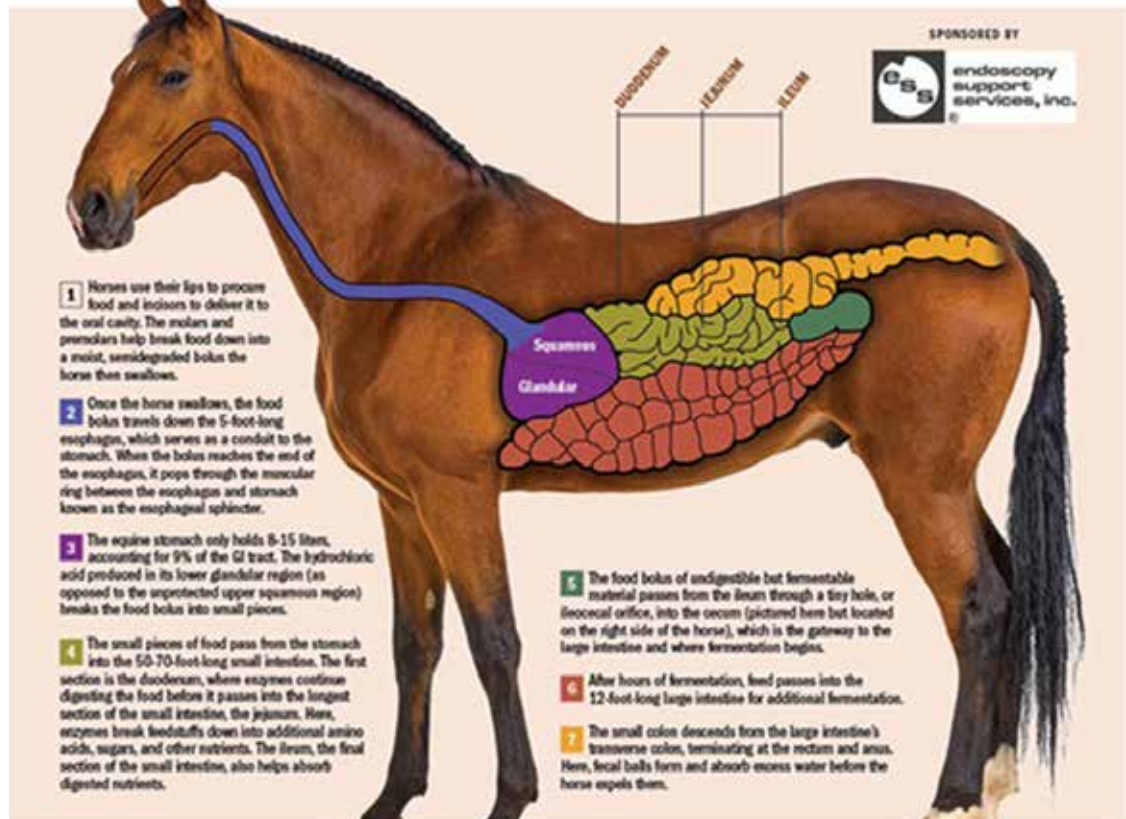
DISCOVER HOW EACH REGION OF YOUR HORSE'S DIGESTIVE SYSTEM WORKS WITH THIS VISUAL GUIDE.

Having a clear understanding of equine gastrointestinal (GI) tract structure and function maximizes an owner's ability to recognize the wide array of digestive conditions that can threaten horse health. Anyone who has suffered through the roller coaster of colic or battled gastric ulcers in their horse knows the balance between GI clockwork and a ticking time bomb is tenuous. Here's a color-coded guide to how each region works to help your horse digest food and utilize the energy (calories) he needs to thrive.

## WHAT COULD GO WRONG?

The intestinal tract's massive length, volume, and continual change in diameter and direction put it at risk of several health conditions, including:

- **Gastric ulcers** - Caused by splashing hydrochloric acid in the stomach's squamous and glandular regions.
- **Colic** - Abdominal pain due to intestinal twists, blockages (e.g., impactions), or even inflammation.
- **Internal parasites** - Horses are most commonly affected by ascarid, small strongyle, and tapeworm infections.
- **Diarrhea Causes** - include bacterial infections such as salmonella, diet changes, or stress.
- **Hindgut acidosis** - A sudden decrease in pH can make the large intestine's contents more acidic than normal, potentially causing ulceration and diarrhea.



## TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

Assess horses' health daily, maintain a consistent forage-based diet, integrate feed changes slowly to allow the microorganisms in the GI tract to adapt to those alterations, and consult a veterinarian immediately if you discover any abnormalities.

*The Horse*

# TIPS FOR FEEDING HORSES WITH WHEAT AND CORN ALLERGIES

LEARN ABOUT FEED ALLERGIES IN HORSES—INCLUDING ALLERGY TESTING—AND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO MAKE SURE YOUR ALLERGIC HORSE GETS THE NUTRITION HE NEEDS.

## IS IT AN ALLERGY OR SOMETHING ELSE?

An allergy is an immunologic reaction to a substance, in this case an ingested food or feed ingredient. But often the clinical signs seen aren't immunologic in nature; rather they're adverse reactions to the food. For ease though, veterinarians often refer to these clinical signs to as "allergies."

Another complicating factor regarding equine food allergies is that many of the related clinical signs could have a number of causes. For this reason, it's imperative to collect a thorough history on the horse's health, as well as his environment, diet, and overall management.

## BLOOD-SERUM TESTS

Industry professionals are often contacted by owners who have had food allergies diagnosed by their veterinarian using serum allergy tests or, more rarely, interdermal skin tests. The problem is that research and anecdotal evidence has shown both forms of testing can be unreliable when it comes to diagnosing food allergies. There have been circumstances where blood was collected from a horse showing no signs of any allergies, sent the serum sample to two different labs, and provided the labs with a history on the horse stating that it did, in fact, have allergies. Both labs diagnosed the horse with allergies, but offered contradictory results on the allergens.

## INTERDERMAL TESTS

Positive interdermal tests to food items such as hays or grain dusts might show the horse has a respiratory allergy to the pollen in the hay or dust if it is breathed in. These are not food allergies. In fact, the horse might do just fine being fed that hay if it were, for example, a pellet form where it would not be breathing in pollen contained within the loose hay.

## ELIMINATION DIET

The only way to accurately diagnose food allergies is to do what is called a withdrawal or elimination diet. Here all current food items are removed from the ration and the horse is fed a novel diet it has not been fed before. This is typically a single type of hay fed for two to three months. If the horse is allergic to a feed ingredient in his previous diet, his clinical signs should improve after several weeks. However, this doesn't determine the allergen. To do this, you must individually introduce previous feed items and observe the horse for a reoccurrence of clinical signs.

While this method takes time and the risk that clinical signs will reoccur, it's the only accurate way to determine exactly what feed or ingredient the horse is allergic to. Understandably, most owners do not wish to go to this trouble, especially if the horse was previously miserable and is now fully recovered. Many owners decide that they are not willing to reintroduce the potential allergen back into the diet even if it would confirm the diagnosis. Instead, most just avoid the ingredient that they suspect as the problem or that was identified via less accurate forms of testing.

## WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU KNOW YOUR HORSE'S FEED ALLERGENS

Reading feed labels, specifically the ingredient list, is important. I suggest only offering commercial feeds that give detailed ingredient lists rather than using collective feed terms, which are terms that are allowed in some states that cover a wide range of potential ingredients. For example, "plant protein product" can be one of many sources of plant protein, which might include corn or wheat-based ingredients.

If your horse maintains weight on forage alone, look for a supplement that provides the needed trace minerals and vitamins that might be lacking in his diet. While corn isn't used in horse feeds as often as it once was, wheat byproducts are common and hard to avoid. If your horse needs additional calories, you might consider adding single-ingredient feeds such as sugar beet pulp, rice bran, and/or oats.

*Clair Thunes, PhD*

## Augusta Co-op Solution

### Triple Crown Equine, Safe Starch Forage, Bale

Safe Starch Horse Grass Hay Forage is a mixture of orchard and Timothy hays that provides horses with their entire diet; forage, as well as vitamins and minerals. Featuring Triple Crown's unique EquiMix technology, the horse hay forage is specially selected and low NSC grass hay forage that is molasses and grain-free, and provides 6% fat.



SKU - 3004489





# Equine Wine & Dine + Product Booking

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2021  
5:00 PM - 8:00 PM**

NEW in 2021 ~ Augusta Co-op Equine, Wine & Dine + Product Booking! Augusta Co-op has secured the best prices of the year on fencing, equine supplies, supplements, animal health items, feed, equine related farm equipment and more! Vendors on site! This organized event, works similar to a 'pre-order', or 'booking' and is not available in-store. Plus, hear from industry leaders on innovation & technology during your complimentary dinner and wine sampling. Huge door prizes, free goodie bags and more!

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM – Vendor booking / Wine tasting hour  
6:00 PM – Dinner served  
6:15 PM – Seminar begins

RSVP here (<http://equinewineanddine.rsvpify.com>)  
by September 1 to attend the event

Wednesday, September 15, 2021 from 5 PM – 8 PM  
at the Virginia Horse Center Foundation (Mezzanine Level).  
(Limited seating)



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**HOWL-WEEN COSTUME CONTEST**  
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