



Kopec Veterinary Associates, P.C.

24 Hour Mobile Equine Service and Haul In Facility

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Equine Nutrition

Basic Guidelines

- Water
 - Fresh, 24/7 access
 - 23 mL/lb/day; 1000 lb horse would require 23 L/day (about 6 gallons)
 - If you are adding electrolytes to your horse's water, ALWAYS make sure that they also have a bucket of plain water
- Forage: 1-2% body weight/day
 - 1000 lb horse should consume between 10-20 lbs of forage per day

How Do I Know if My Forage is Good?

- Use your senses
 - Good quality hay will be green in appearance, have more leaves than stem and smell fresh (compared to musty or moldy)
- Forage Analysis
 - EquiAnalytical

Does My Horse Need Grain?

Yes IF,

- Forage alone is not adequate to maintain ideal BCS
- Forage alone is not providing adequate nutrition
- Digestibility
 - Think older horses that lose their teeth and then are not able to grind hay and grass well enough to gain nutrition from them

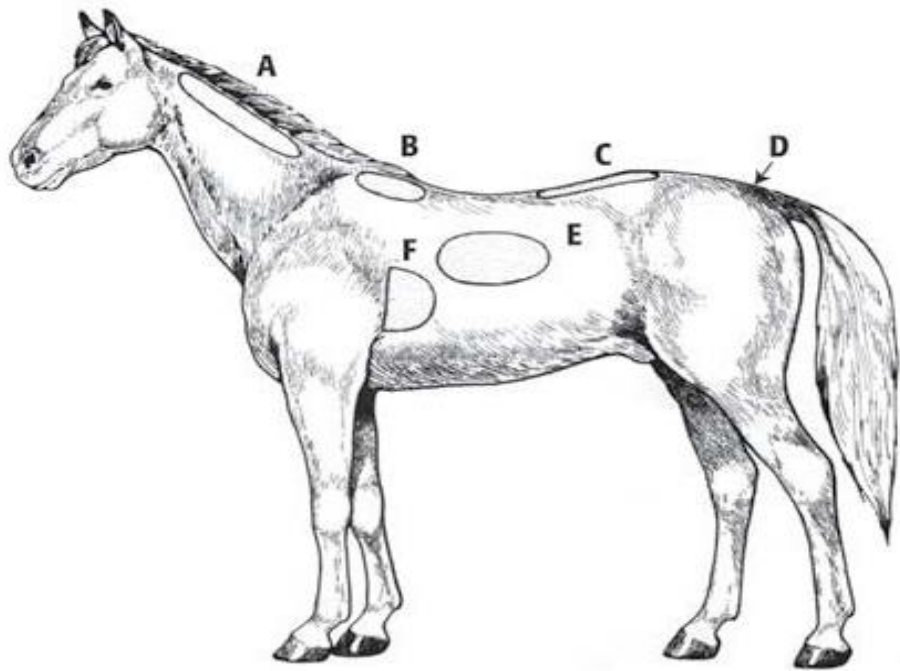
*****If adding grain to a horse's diet, it is important to make sure that it is no more than 40-45% of the diet**

Gauging Your Horse's Weight

- Body Condition Score!
 - 5/9 = ideal body condition score
 - Each body score above and below ideal is considered to be about 50 lbs (for the average sized horse)
- Weight Tape
 - Very useful when trying to gauge whether your horse is losing/gaining/maintaining weight like you would prefer

- Preventative Care Exams
 - We always perform a body condition score on your horse during our preventative care exams. If you are confused about the score we gave your horse or if you would like an individualized nutritional plan please let us know!!

How to Check Body Condition Score



What To Do For the Underweight/Thin Horse

- Adequate amount of forage?
- Appropriate amount of grain?
- Appropriate type of grain?
- Appropriate deworming program?
- Have you tested them for endocrine disease?
 - PPID/Cushing's Disease: Can cause muscle atrophy/loss which is usually recognized as weight loss

Not All Oil is Created Equal

- Balance of Omega-3 (anti-inflammatory) vs. Omega-6 (pro-inflammatory) fatty acids
- The type recommended depends on the purpose/individual horse
- Weight gain
- Coat health
- Overall Body System Health

Oil Types

- Corn Oil: High in Omega-6 fatty acids and very palatable
- Rice Bran Oil: Contains gamma-oryzanol, lecithins, and vitamin E, as well as Omega-3 and 6 fatty acids
- Flaxseed/Linseed Oil: high in Omega-3 fatty acid and a good source of vitamin E
- Soybean Oil: high in Omega-3 fatty acid and vitamin E
- Sunflower Seed Oil: high in Omega-6 fatty acids

What To Do For the Overweight/Obese Horse

- Is your horse receiving grain that it doesn't need?
- Is your horse receiving too much hay/grass?
- What does your horse's exercise program look like?
- Have you tested them for metabolic disease?
 - Equine Metabolic Disease

Helpful Items to Reduce Over-eating

- Muzzle: Allows horses to still consume grass/hay but at a much slower rate so they are less likely to over eat
- Nibble Net: This hay net with small holes keeps horses busy for a longer period of time with a small amount of hay to keep them from developing bad habits stemmed from boredom
- Dry Lots: Horses can consume an entire day's worth of forage in 6 hours if allowed to graze freely which is why limited turn out does not always work

-Heather M. Crather, D.V.M.