

A good horse feeding chart turns guesswork into a practical day-to-day plan. It guides you work out how much horse feed to provide, how to balance forage and concentrates, and when to change the daily ration for exercise level, body condition and digestive health. Instead of treating every horse the same, a useful chart takes body weight, workload, pasture access and hay quality into account.

The smartest approach is always forage first. Hay, pasture and other forms of forage should form the foundation of the diet, with concentrates, nuts and pellets, chaff or a supplement added only when needed. That keeps the digestive system working steadily, supports gut health and helps maintain a balanced diet with the right mix of fibre, protein, energy, vitamins and minerals.

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What a Horse Feeding Chart Is and Why It Matters

A horse feeding chart is a simple framework that links horse feed amounts to body weight, workload and forage intake. It is not just about filling a bucket. It is a guide for feeding rate, feed schedule and ration balance so the horse gets enough energy without too much starch or unnecessary calories. For many owners, it is the easiest way to understand how horse feeding rules work in real life.

The chart matters because horses are individuals. Two horses of similar size may need very different diets if one lives mostly on pasture and the other works harder or struggles to hold condition. A clear horse feeding chart reduces the risk of overfeeding concentrates, underfeeding fibre, or missing important vitamins and minerals. It also makes it easier to spot when the body condition is changing and the ration needs to be adjusted.

Using a chart also supports digestive health. Horses are designed to graze for much of the day, so frequent forage intake helps keep the gut stable. When forage is limited, a horse feed plan should compensate carefully, not simply add extra starch. That is why many horse feeding rules start with hay and pasture, then add a suitable concentrate only if the horse's workload or body condition requires it.

10 Rules of Feeding Horses: Core Principles to Use

These 10 rules of feeding horses provide a practical foundation for everyday management. They are an effective way to apply horse feeding rules without turning the process complicated. They also deliver sensible horse feed advice uk owners can use for many healthy horses.

- **1. Start with forage first.** Forage from hay and pasture should be the main part of the diet whenever possible.
- **2. Match feed to workload.** A light hack needs reduced energy than a horse in harder work.
- **3. Base horse feed amounts on body weight.** Larger horses usually need a larger daily ration.
- **4. Use condition score, not guesswork.** A horse body condition score tells you if the diet is too generous or too lean.
- **5. Protect digestive health.** Keep meals sensible, regular and built around fibre.
- **6. Avoid excess starch.** Too much starch can upset gut health and make behaviour less calm.
- **7. Offer water at all times.** Good hydration supports digestion and overall function.

- **8. Introduce changes gradually.** Any new horse feed or forage should be changed over several days.
- **9. Feed according to the horse, not the label alone.** Brand guidance is useful, but it should be adjusted to the individual.
- **10. Review regularly.** Body weight, workload, pasture quality and season all affect feeding needs.

These horse feeding rules are especially important when using concentrates. Concentrates can raise energy and protein intake, but they should not replace forage. Good horse feed advice usually emphasises that a feeding plan should be built around fibre and adjusted carefully, rather than assuming more is always better.

Types of Horse Feed and When to Use Them

Understanding the main horse feed options makes it simpler to build a balanced diet. Most horse feed falls into a few broad categories, each with a different use. The right choice depends on training load, condition, forage quality and whether the horse needs extra energy, protein, vitamins or minerals.

Forage includes hay and pasture, and it should make up the majority of the ration. Forage is usually high in fibre and supports chewing, saliva production and gut health. If pasture is [low starch fibre feed](#) abundant and well managed, it may supply much of the horse's daily needs. If pasture is limited, hay becomes even more important.

Concentrates are more nutrient rich feeds used to provide extra energy, protein and micronutrients. They are often chosen for horses in regular hard exercise, horses that struggle to keep weight on, or horses with specific requirements. Concentrates can come as pellets and nuts, a mix, or a textured feed.

Chaff is chopped forage, often used to encourage slower eating, improve palatability and add fibre to the bucket feed. It can also help reduce the amount of starch in a meal when combined with other feeds.

Complete horse feed is designed to provide a better-rounded diet in one product, usually combining fibre, energy, protein, vitamins and minerals. It may be helpful for owners who want ease and consistency, especially when forage quality varies. However, it still needs to be fed in line with the horse's body weight and workload.

Nuts and pellets are popular forms because they are simple to portion and often have consistent digestibility. Some are formulated for maintenance, while others are aimed at performance, weight gain or digestive support.

Brands such as **spillers horse feed** offer a wide range of formulations for different needs. The key is to choose a feed that fits the horse, rather than choosing a product only because it is popular. Think about forage first, then use the feed to cover any gaps in the diet.

Horse Feed Calculator UK Guide: How to Figure Out Rations

A horse feed calculator uk can help estimate a sensible starting point for the daily ration. The most important inputs are horse weight, body condition, workload and forage intake. A calculator should not replace observation, but it can help guide decisions on how much horse feed to use.

Begin with body weight. You can estimate horse weight with a weighbridge or weigh tape, then use that figure to work out the forage target and any concentrate feed. Most plans aim to include ample forage and only add concentrates where necessary. If a horse is already getting plenty of hay or pasture, the horse feed amount may be much lower than expected.

Then look at workload. A horse in light work may maintain condition on forage and a small amount of complete horse feed, while a horse in harder work may need more energy density, protein and possibly more frequent meals. The feed schedule should match the work level, not just the size of the horse.

Body condition is equally important. A horse with a low condition score may need more digestible energy, while one carrying too much weight may need reduced calorie intake and a careful review of pasture and concentrate use. The goal is a healthy body condition rather than simply increasing feed.

A practical way to think about ration planning is:

- Set forage intake as the base of the diet.
- Check whether hay or pasture quality is good enough to meet maintenance needs.
- Add concentrates only if body weight, workload or condition score show a need.
- Review the ration whenever workload changes, especially after rest periods or seasonal changes in pasture.

This method is more effective than a one-size-fits-all figure because it considers digestibility, energy needs and gut health together. A horse feed calculator uk is most useful when paired with regular monitoring of body weight and condition.

Sample Horse Feeding Chart by Exercise Level and Condition

A horse feeding chart should constantly be adapted to the individual, but a basic guide can help beginners understand how feeding changes with activity level and body condition. The following example is not a rigid rule; it is a useful reference for planning the day-to-day ration.

Maintenance or very light work: Many horses do well on good-quality hay or pasture with little or no concentrate. If the horse holds condition well, a small amount of complete horse feed or a balancer may be enough to deliver vitamins and minerals.

Easy work: A horse may need a modest concentrate feed alongside forage, especially if the pasture is poor or the hay is less digestible. Chaff and nuts and pellets can be useful here, particularly if the horse needs a sustained release of energy rather than a high-starch meal.

Medium work: More energy and protein are usually needed. This is where many owners increase concentrate intake, while still keeping forage intake high. The horse feed should support stamina and recovery without upsetting digestive health.

Heavy work: Horses in harder work often need a more carefully structured ration. A combination of forage, complete horse feed or a suitable concentrate, and possibly extra supplement support may be required. Splitting the feed into smaller meals is often better for digestive health and palatability.

Condition score should influence every stage of the chart. A horse with a low horse body condition score may need more calories, while one that is over-conditioned may need less energy and tighter control of pasture. Beginners often focus on what the horse is doing, but the body condition score shows how the current ration is actually working.

For horse feed for beginners, the simplest rule is this: if the horse is holding weight, managing workload and showing good digestive health, the ration is probably close to right. If weight is changing too fast, or the horse looks dull, hungry or too fresh, the chart needs reviewing.

How Much Does Horse Feed Cost?

Horse feed pricing depends on the kind of feed, the brand, the daily feeding rate and whether you are purchasing a one product or different individual ingredients. Forage costs can also vary widely depending on hay

quality, storage and supply. A basic maintenance plan often costs less than a higher-energy feed plan for horses in work.

Fully balanced horse feed can sometimes seem higher-priced per bag, but it may simplify feeding and cut back on the need to buy several products. In certain situations, that makes it a smart buy. However, if the horse has plenty of forage and only needs a little extra nutrition, a lower-cost concentrate or balancer may be more economical.

Horse feed manufacturers differ in composition, ingredient quality and daily intake, all of which affect cost per day. A lower-cost bag does not always mean lower feeding overall. The best comparison is daily ration cost, not kilogram cost alone. That helps you compare feeds based on practical use rather than packaging price.

When assessing horse feed cost, look at:

- The amount the horse requires each day.
- Whether the feed takes the place of other products or adds to them.
- How much forage the horse already receives from hay and pasture.
- Whether the feed boosts body condition, energy and digestive health.

If a feed improves condition score, lowers waste and promotes a properly balanced diet, it may offer greater value than a lower-cost option that demands a higher feeding rate. That is why horse feed cost should always be looked at in line with activity level, forage standard and nutritional value.

Horse Feed Mix Recipe: When a Bespoke Mix Is Worth It

A horse feed combination recipe can be useful when you want more control over the varieties of horse feed in the ration. A custom mix may make sense if the horse has individual needs, if the available commercial options do not suit the workload, or if you want to fine-tune palatability and fibre content. This is also where horse feed advice uk can be especially valuable.

A straightforward custom mix often mixes chopped fibre, nuts and pellets, and a source of extra vitamins and minerals if needed. The aim is to create a complete diet that provides energy, protein and digestibility without relying too heavily on starch. Some owners add chaff to prolong the meal and improve chewing, while others use a mix of feeds to manage body weight more precisely.

A custom horse feed mix recipe should always be based on forage first. If hay and pasture already provide most of the horse's needs, the mix only needs to cover gaps. If the horse is in hard work or is losing condition, the mix can be modified to provide more energy or protein. The key is to keep the ration workable, not complicated.

Custom mixes are not automatically better than complete horse feed. They can be beneficial, but they require more knowledge and more regular review. If the feed is not balanced correctly, deficiencies or excesses may arise over time. For many owners, a reputable complete feed or a carefully selected concentrate is the more secure option.

Horse Feed for Starters: Frequent Errors to Prevent

Horse feed for beginners can seem overwhelming because there are so many choices. The most frequent mistakes are usually simple to avoid once you learn the horse feeding rules. The first is feeding excessive concentrate and too little forage. Horses need fibre for digestive health, so hay, haylage or pasture should be the focus.

A further common error is changing horse feed too quickly. Sudden changes can affect gut health and lead to loose droppings, reduced appetite or other digestive issues. Any new horse feed should be introduced slowly so the digestive system can adapt.

Beginners also often feed by eye rather than by body weight. That can lead to overfeeding or underfeeding, especially with larger horses. A weigh tape, weighbridge or other estimate of body weight gives a more accurate starting point for ration planning.

Other common mistakes include:

- Neglecting the horse body condition score.
- Selecting feeds without considering workload.
- Offering high-starch products for horses that do not need them.
- Believing all horse feed is interchangeable.
- Overlooking that pasture quality changes through the year.

Good horse feed advice uk usually comes back to the same principles: forage first, feed by need, change slowly and keep reviewing the plan. That makes horse feeding more straightforward and safer.

Selecting Between Horse Feed Companies and Brands

There are numerous horse feed companies offering different products, and choosing between them often comes down to formulation, feeding rate, consistency and support. Brand reputation matters, but the ingredient list and nutritional balance matter more. The best horse feed companies usually make it easy to match feed to workload, body condition and forage intake.

Spillers horse feed is one example of a well-known brand with a broad range of complete horse feed and other formulations. That kind of range can be useful when you need a maintenance feed, a performance option or something tailored to digestive health. However, the right choice is always the one that suits your horse's actual needs.

When comparing brands, look at:

- Whether the product is a complete horse feed or a supplement-style feed.
- The amount of starch and fibre in the ration.
- How the feeding rate fits the horse's body weight and workload.
- Whether the feed supports body condition and digestive health.
- How easy it is to integrate with forage, chaff and other feeds.

A dependable brand can make feeding simpler, but the horse still remains the focus. The best-fitting product is the one that aligns with the horse feeding chart, not the one with the biggest label or the heaviest marketing.

FAQ: Horse Feeding Chart and Horse Feed Basics

How do I use a horse feeding chart?

Start with the horse's body weight, then assess workload, forage intake and condition score. Use the chart to decide the daily ration, beginning with hay or pasture and then adding concentrates, nuts and pellets or a complete feed only if needed. Check the plan regularly as workload and body condition change.

What are the main types of horse feed?

The main types of horse feed include forage like hay and pasture, concentrates, nuts and pellets, chaff and full horse feed. Some horses also need a supplement to add extra vitamins and minerals. The right choice depends on workload, body condition and how much forage the horse already gets.

How much horse feed should I give my horse each day?

The right horse feed portion depends on mass, activity level, forage intake and body condition score. No single answer exists for each horse. A horse receiving lots of quality hay and only mild exercise may need minimal concentrate, while a horse in harder work may call for a larger, carefully balanced ration.

What is complete horse feed and when should it be used?

Full horse feed serves as a feed option made to deliver a better balanced feeding plan in one feed, generally with roughage, fuel, protein, vitamins and minerals. It can be useful when you prefer a simple , reliable option or when grazing quality varies. It can be a practical choice for horses that need convenience without losing nutritional balance.

How much does horse feed cost on average?

Horse feed cost differs depending on feed type, the brand, the amount fed, and the quality of forage you buy. The clearest way to judge value is cost per daily ration rather than the price per bag. A complete feed may be pricier per bag but still be economical if the horse needs only a modest amount each day.