

Picking the right **horse feed** in the warmer months is not just about adding energy and mainly about supporting **hydration, digestive health**, and a steady supply of usable nutrients. With more **grazing**, higher temperatures, and often a change in **workload**, **summer horse feeding** needs a practical approach. The best results usually come from a **forage first** plan, careful use of **hard feed**, and close attention to **body condition score**.

Summer diets should help a horse stay cool, maintain **bodyweight**, and keep **gut health** stable. That means looking at what the horse eats, how much exercise it does, how much **pasture** it has, and whether the diet is balanced for **nutrient requirements**. In many cases, the best answer is less feed overall, but the right type <http://business.theantlersamerican.com/theantlersamerican/markets/article/abnewswire-2026-7-24-with-half-of-britains-horses-overweight-bifid-launches-grain-free-low-sugar-feed-for-the-nations-good-doers/> of feed in the right amount.

What varies in a horse's diet in summer?

Summer alters a horse's diet in several important ways. The largest difference is usually access to **grazing** and fresh **pasture**, which can raise the amount of fiber, water, and sugar in the diet. That influences **hydration**, energy intake, and digestive function. A horse on regular **pasture turnout** may need less bucket feed than it does in winter, but it still needs a properly balanced feed plan.

Hot weather also increases the risk of **heat stress**. Horses may sweat heavily, drink less than expected, or lose **electrolytes**. This makes hydration balance a major part of summer horse feeding. A horse may need more access to clean water, salt, and electrolytes, especially if it is in work. If appetite drops in the heat, highly palatable feed can help maintain intake without overloading the digestive system.

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Another change is the quality of forage. Summer grass can be rich in **sugar**, which may suit some horses but not others. Horses prone to weight gain, laminitis, or metabolic issues may need tighter control of grazing and a diet that stays **low sugar** and **low starch**. On the other hand, hard-working horses may need enough digestible energy to support performance without excessive starch.

The main goal is to adjust feeding to the season, not to feed the same ration all year. Summer feeding should be guided by condition, workload, and the amount of roughage already coming from the field or paddock.

What types of horse feed are best in hot weather?

The ideal **types of horse feed** for high temperatures are usually those that promote digestive health, keep the horse eating steadily, and limit abrupt bursts of energy. This often means a ration built around **forage** with a carefully chosen bucket feed if needed. The right feeds depend on the horse's work, condition, and forage access.

Forage is the foundation of the diet. Good-quality **forage** or **baled forage** can be used if pasture intake is not enough or if grass is sparse. For horses that maintain weight easily, forage may be enough on its own. For horses needing additional support, the next step is often a **complete horse feed** or a **balancer feed**, depending on how much extra energy is needed.

A **complete horse feed** can be beneficial because it is formulated to provide fibre, vitamins, and minerals in one feed. Numerous products are made to be **low starch** and **low sugar**, making them appropriate for summer when digestive comfort matters. This can be a practical option for horses that need a no-fuss diet and reliable nutrient intake.

For the horses that only need vitamins, minerals, and amino acids to support grazing and forage, a balancer may be a better choice than a full hard feed ration. That helps avoid unnecessary calories while still meeting nutrient requirements. Horses in harder work may need a feed with more digestible fibre and some starch, but the aim should still be to keep the diet as consistent and settled as possible.

When comparing feed options, seek out:

- Rich in digestible fibre content
- Moderate or low starch levels
- Restricted sugar content
- Solid vitamin and mineral coverage
- Easy-to-follow guidance on feeding rate by bodyweight and workload

In summer, the ideal horse feed is typically one that provides energy without excess heat-producing starch. That does not mean you must avoid starch entirely, but it should be handled with care and aligned with exercise requirements.

Should you decrease hard feed in summer?

In many cases, yes. **Hard feed** often should be reduced in summer because pasture and grazing can supply more of the diet already. If a horse is on lush grass, the amount of bucket feed may be higher than necessary. Cutting back on **feed quantity** can help prevent too much weight gain and limit digestive strain.

That said, the correct answer depends on **workload**. A horse in light work may need very little hard feed, while a competition horse, a poor doer, or a horse with a demanding schedule may still need more fuel. The principle is to feed according to output, not season alone. Summer simply alters what the horse is already getting from forage and pasture.

If reducing hard feed, do it slowly. Sudden changes can affect the hindgut and disrupt appetite. Keep an eye on energy levels, coat condition, and body condition score. If the horse begins to lose weight, becomes dull, or struggles to recover after exercise, the ration may need modifying.

Some horses do better when the hard feed is swapped with more forage-based calories rather than a dense cereal mix. This supports digestive health and can reduce the risk of sharp energy peaks. For many owners, the best summer strategy is to reduce bucket feed where possible, but keep the ration well balanced and appropriate for the horse's actual workload.

How horse feeding rules change in summer

Horse feeding rules do not disappear in summer; they simply become more important. The classic **10 rules of feeding horses** still apply, but summer conditions make some of them especially relevant. The most important **horse feeding advice** is to focus on forage, water, consistency, and careful observation.

- Give **forage first** and shape the diet around roughage.
- Offer clean water at all times to support hydration.

- Select feed that matches workload and body condition.
- Make ration changes slowly.
- Maintain feeding times as consistent as possible.
- Avoid overfeeding energy to horses that are already getting rich pasture.
- Balance minerals and vitamins even when bucket feed is reduced.
- Replace electrolytes if the horse sweats heavily.
- Monitor bodyweight and body condition score regularly.
- Watch for signs of digestive upset, heat stress, or reduced appetite.

These rules matter because summer can mask problems. A horse may look fine on the surface, yet still have a poor hydration balance or be getting too much sugar from grass. Feeding choices should support stable **gut health** and even energy release.

A sensible summer plan is to review the whole diet, not just the bucket. Grazing, forage, hard feed, supplements, and exercise all interact. Good horse feeding rules are about matching the ration to the horse's real needs.

How to follow a horse feeding chart

A **horse feeding chart** is useful because it lets owners compare feed amounts against bodyweight, work level, and condition. It is not a fixed answer for every horse, but it gives a baseline for building a **daily ration**. A chart also helps you see when a horse is getting too little forage or too much hard feed.

One of the most important measures is **body condition score**. This tells you whether the horse is underweight, ideal, or carrying excess cover. In summer, a horse may maintain condition on pasture alone, while another loses weight because of work or heat. A feeding chart helps you react in a systematic way instead of guessing.

To follow a chart well:

- Estimate the horse's **bodyweight** correctly.
- Check body condition score rather than relying on appearance alone.
- Look at how much forage and pasture the horse already has.
- Match bucket feed to the horse's workload.
- Adjust the daily ration gradually if condition changes.

A chart is most effective when combined with real-world observation. If the horse is losing topline, appearing flat, or not recovering well after exercise, the chart may need adjusting. If weight is creeping up, reduce energy intake and review grazing access. The chart is a tool, not a replacement for judgment.

How much horse feed should a horse get in summer?

No single answer exists to how much **horse feed** a horse should get in summer, because the right amount varies with bodyweight, workload, forage intake, and pasture quality. A **horse feed calculator uk** can be useful as a starting point, but it should always be tailored to the horse in front of you. Summer diets often need less hard feed and greater focus on roughage.

The central question is not just the amount of bucket feed to give, but how much total forage the horse is eating. **Forage intake** from pasture, hay, and haylage may often cover a large part of the horse's energy needs. If the horse is on lush pasture, additional feed may need to be limited. If the horse has restricted grazing, then forage and bucket feed both matter more.

A helpful **horse feeding chart** usually is built on hay as the core and then adds rations or ration balancer according to exercise level. Horses in easy work may only need a nutritional balancer and hay. Horses in medium to intense work may need a more robust feed, but still not so much starch that it leads to digestive problems.

In practical terms, see that the ration maintains condition, not just calories. If a horse is holding a healthy body condition score, shows good energy, and is eating well, the amount is probably about right. If you are not sure, use a calculator as a guide, then evaluate the diet weekly.

What should beginners know about summer horse feeding?

For **horse feed for beginners**, the easiest advice is to keep the diet consistent, built around forage, and easy to monitor. Summer can make feeding seem simpler because horses may get more grass, but it can also make it more difficult to judge what the horse really needs. Good **horse feed advice uk** often starts with consistency and observation rather than complex feeds.

A strong **feeding routine** matters. Feed at the same times each day where possible, provide constant access to water, and keep forage available so the horse does not have big gaps without fibre. Beginners should learn to assess body condition score and watch for changes in appetite, droppings, hydration, and behaviour.

It is also important to know that not every horse needs a substantial hard feed. Some horses do best with hay, grazing, and a balancer. Others need more support because of work, age, or poor condition. Beginners should avoid copying another horse's ration without checking whether the workload and pasture access are truly similar.

If you are new to summer feeding, start by asking three questions: how much grazing does the horse have, how much work is it doing, and is the horse maintaining bodyweight? Those answers usually point to the right type and amount of feed.

Which horse feed brands and companies are commonly chosen?

There are many **horse feed companies** on the market, and owners often choose products based on forage backing, condition management, or performance needs. Some brands are commonly recognised, including **spillers horse feed**, which is often considered by owners looking for a wide selection of feed types and balancers.

Brand choice should begin with the **feed labels**. Labels tell you the source of energy, starch and sugar levels, fibre content, and whether the product is a full **complete horse feed** or a complementary feed. This is especially important in summer, when a feed that looks suitable at first glance may be too rich for a horse already getting plenty of pasture.

When [overweight horse feed](#) reviewing brands, compare:

- Digestible fibre levels
- Starch, sugar, and carbohydrate levels are important
- Whether the feed is complete or needs forage alongside it
- Suitability for light, moderate, or hard work
- Vitamin and mineral coverage in the feed

Different horse feed companies may sell similar products, but the details matter. A good label helps you match the feed to the horse's body condition score, workload, and forage access. In summer, the best brand is the one that fits the ration, not necessarily the one with the biggest name.

How much does horse feed cost in summer?

Horse feed cost changes depending on feed type, quality, and how much the horse needs. If you are asking **how much does horse feed cost** in summer, the answer depends on whether the horse is mainly on forage and grazing or needs a full bucket feed. In many cases, summer can lower feed bills if pasture provides a large share of the diet.

A sensible **budget** should include not just bucket feed, but also hay, haylage, balancers, electrolytes, and supplements where needed. Horses that sweat heavily may need extra support for hydration and electrolytes, and that should be counted as part of the total feeding cost. A horse on limited grazing may still need significant forage, so summer does not always mean lower costs.

To manage cost well:

- Make use of forage efficiently and avoid waste
- Feed only what the horse needs for its workload
- Choose a balancer if full hard feed is unnecessary
- Check whether the horse is overfed on rich pasture
- Compare the cost per day, not just the bag price

The lowest-cost option is not always the best if it fails to support digestive health or condition. The best budget decision is usually the one that keeps the horse healthy, avoids waste, and matches the summer ration to actual need.

Can you make a horse feed mix recipe at home?

Yes, you can make a **horse feed mix recipe** at home, but it must be done carefully to maintain **ration balance**. A home mix can be useful for owners who want to control ingredients, but it is easy to get the balance wrong if the diet lacks vitamins, minerals, or amino acids. That is why a **balancer** is often the safest way to support a home-made ration.

If preparing a ration, keep the base plain and forage-focused. The aim should be a low-risk gentle diet rather than a overly detailed recipe. Many horses do well with water-soaked or pelleted fibre sources, a balancer, and a small amount of weight-gain feed if needed. This can help support energy without increasing starch too high.

Main points for a home mix:

- Keep starch limited unless the horse truly needs it
- Use ingredients that provide digestible fibre
- Include a balancer for nutrient coverage
- Check the feed against the horse's work demands and bodyweight
- Review body condition score routinely

Home mixing can be effective, but the diet must still fulfil nutrient requirements. If you are unsure, choose a proven commercial feed or ask for help fine-tuning the ration. A recipe is only useful if it supports health consistently over time.

When should you ask for horse feed advice?

You should ask for **horse feed advice uk** whenever the horse's state, work output, or digestion changes and the cause is not obvious. A **vet** should be involved if there are signs of illness, weight loss, poor appetite, loose droppings, colic risk, or suspected metabolic problems. A qualified **nutritionist** is helpful when you need a ration designed around bodyweight, workload, grazing access, and condition goals.

It is especially important if:

- The horse is losing or gaining weight quickly
- There are signs of heat stress or poor hydration balance
- Grazing changes suddenly
- You are unsure whether the horse needs more forage, less hard feed, or a different type of feed
- The horse has special needs such as laminitis risk, poor teeth, or competition demands

Good horse feed advice is hands-on and specific. It should help you select the right feed quantity, support digestive health, and make feeding easier to manage. If you are ever unsure, professional input is worth it, especially during summer when pasture and heat can alter the ration quickly.

FAQs about nutrition for horses in summer

What is the best horse feed for summer?

The most suitable **horse feed** for summer is usually based on forage and suited to the horse's activity level and condition score. For many horses, that means good-quality hay, haylage, or grazing, plus a low-starch balancer or a **complete horse feed** if more nutrients are needed. The best option is the one that supports hydration, digestive health, and steady energy without overloading the horse on sugar or starch.

Should horses eat less hard feed in hot weather?

Often yes, because summer grazing and pasture can already provide more energy and fibre. Reducing **hard feed** may help reduce the risk of weight gain and support gut comfort. However, the final amount depends on **workload**, body condition, and how much forage the horse is already eating. Some horses still need a meaningful bucket feed, especially if they are in regular work.

What amount of forage should a horse have in summer?

Forage should stay the foundation of the diet, whether it comes from grass, hay, or haylage. The exact amount depends on bodyweight, pasture quality, and the rest of the ration, but summer feeding should always protect **forage intake**. If grazing is limited or the horse is losing condition, add hay or haylage to keep fibre intake stable.

Would a complete horse feed appropriate for summer feeding?

Yes, a **complete horse feed** can be suitable in summer, especially if it is designed to be low starch and low sugar. It is often useful when you want a simple ration that provides fibre, vitamins, and minerals in one product. It can work well alongside forage and grazing, provided the amount is adjusted to the horse's workload and body condition.

What is the best way to know if my horse needs a feed calculator or feeding chart?

If you are unsure how much to feed, a **horse feed calculator uk** or **horse feeding chart** is a good starting point. These tools help you estimate a suitable daily ration based on bodyweight, workload, and condition. They are

especially useful if the horse is gaining or shedding weight, getting more or less grazing, or changing work level. Use them as guides, then check the horse's body condition score and adjust gradually.