

HOW TO ACHIEVE THE BEST PERFORMANCE FROM YOUR HORSES

In studying the conditions which give rise to the best performance in horses, the following three factors must be taken into consideration:-

1. Horses are superbly adapted to move with the minimum expenditure of energy.
2. Wild populations of equines move (depending on the availability of food and the presence of predators) anything from 6 to 30 kilometres a day.
3. Horses trickle feed almost continuously for anything up to 16 hours a day.

Designed to move and feed more or less continuously, the horse's digestive system, respiratory system, bloodstream, and lymphatic systems all work at their optimum when the horse enjoys a lifestyle which provides these functions.

Horses leading less optimum lifestyles are more prone to illness and particularly gastric ulcers for the following reasons:-

When a horse runs, this is essentially a function of the fight or flight reaction which causes the release of hormones like adrenalin to increase the oxygen availability to its muscles. Meanwhile its stomach "clenches", increasing abdominal pressure which squeezes the highly acidic lower portion of the stomach into closer contact with the upper portion.

The lower half of a horse's stomach is where the bulk of the food is broken down for digestion, and since this process uses quite strong acids, digestive enzymes and so forth, nature has protected this lower area with a layer of alkaline (bicarbonate) cells called squames. However the upper part of the stomach doesn't have this squameous mucosa and so can be more easily damaged when splashed or squeezed together with the lower stomach contents.

Vigorous exercise therefore is at the base of the high prevalence of gastric ulcers in all sport horses but is only one of many contributory factors.

The horse's stomach and digestive system are designed to deal with quite energy-poor food in a steady trickle. This kind of food soaks up a lot of the acid load, making wild horses less prone to gastric ulcers because, in the short-term, when running from predators, for example, there is less free acid to splash around.

Horses, whose ecological niche provides that they do well on a marginal diet, are prone to doing less well on a rich diet since this can be too acid forming. Counter to this of course is the obvious truism that if you want them to work well, you've got to feed them well. (You have to strike a balance, more on this later!)

Horses are designed to move more or less continually and, since they do not have an organ to circulate their lymph, this circulation relies on movement, on the squeeze and release of various "water shed" muscle groups. The lymph nourishes, cleans, oxygenates and lubricates those cells beyond the reach of the blood supply and is a vital part of the horse's respiratory and immune system. Lymph is filtered and cleaned through the lymph nodes before being returned to the blood supply via the external jugular veins (lymph is essentially the clear blood serum minus the red cells).

Horses have a very large number of lymph nodes, some 8,000 in all, with 4,000 of these sited in the ascending colon where they key into, and are stimulated by, the continual flow of forage through the intestines. This demonstrates that the lymph is also an integral part of the horse's overall digestive system.

When horses have a restricted diet and stand still for long periods, they become more prone to systematic ailments and gastric ulcers, because the very acts of standing still and not eating are unnatural activities in a creature designed by nature to eat and move almost continuously.

Lack of movement means that lymph is not circulated adequately to maintain full cellular respiration and nutrition. Also, lack of feed means that the stomach acid has nothing to work on and becomes more concentrated. Both the above rob the horse of condition and affect its fitness.

As a horse's body becomes generally more acidic, the ability of its bloodstream and lymphatic system to carry enough oxygen to every far-flung cell becomes compromised and the horse loses condition. Its performance falls off and this usually shows when a horse doesn't finish on well in a race or performs poorly in a competition.

The best way to deal with this is to add into the horse's feed regular small quantities of *Happy Tummy™* charcoal. This feed additive transports oxygen into the entire digestive system, whilst at the same time taking toxins out. The effect of this dual activity is to rebalance the pH which increases its oxygen carrying capability and helps restore full cellular respiration.

The result is a much healthier horse in better condition and better able to give of its best.

Because *Happy Tummy™* charcoal transits the digestion system quite slowly, cleaning up as it goes, it tends to mimic the trickle feed effect that is the horse's natural feed pattern and, at the same time, a better oxygenated lymphatic and bloodstream reinvigorates cellular respiration.

In our experience it usually takes about two weeks to flush out a sluggish system thoroughly, after which the horse is a lot more healthy, in better condition with better stamina.

*Team Teke would like to thank Fine Fettle Feeds for their generous donation of a 12.5l tub of **Happy Tummy™** charcoal as a prize in the Photographic Competition.*

**Happy Tummy® Charcoal
The World's Best Natural
Gastric Conditioner.**

The best way to avoid gastric problems in horses is to mix regular small doses of *Happy Tummy®* charcoal into their feed.

Happy Tummy® absorbs toxins, improves the uptake of oxygen, helps rebalance the pH and thoroughly settles the digestive system.

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We are looking for a sales/marketing trainee to join our organisation initially as an intern, with a view to becoming a paid member of staff after completing a successful trial period.

We supply feed supplements to the equine industry and have a very successful line of products. We are looking for a trainee who will help grow our business and ultimately be responsible for his or her own department.

Hours are flexible but the person chosen will be someone who is prepared to train and work hard, acquire a thorough knowledge of their aspect of the business and build a worthwhile career within our organisation.

We're looking for someone with a strong personality.

Write enclosing CV to Fine Fettle Feed, 132 Hereford Road, Monmouth, NP25 3GD or call 01600 712496 for a pre-interview discussion.