

SINCE



1929

PRST STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 80
Staunton, VA

AUGUSTA COOPERATIVE FARM BUREAU, INC.
1205B RICHMOND RD.
STAUNTON, VA 24401



AUGUSTACOO.P.COM / AUGUSTACOO.PFB / AUGUSTACOO.PFB



AGRONOMY & EQUINE EDITOR
June 2026



1929



SINCE

10 SMART WAYS TO FEED PERFORMANCE HORSES

Feeding performance horses isn't about adding more feed to their bucket when the workload increases. It requires precision through balancing energy supply, supporting gut health, and meeting your horse's nutrient requirements. Regardless of discipline, building an appropriate feed program can support your horse's performance and longevity.

1. Forage First for Equine Athletes

Even for performance horses, forage remains the foundation of the diet. High quality hay and pasture provide fermentable fiber, support hindgut health, and help reduce ulcer risk. Equine nutritionists recommend most horses consume about 2% of their body weight in forage daily, which can include pasture, long-stem forage, pelleted or cubed forage, and chopped hay.

2. Feed for the Horse's Workload, Not the Discipline

Carefully consider your horse's individual needs when developing a nutrition plan to support his workload. Energy requirements reflect both workload and the horse's body condition. Some horses maintain condition well on high-quality hay plus a ration balancer, while others benefit from a calorie-dense performance feed when training demands increase.

Horses with insulin dysregulation or other metabolic concerns often do better on a low-starch, controlled-carbohydrate feed that provides needed calories without excessive sugar and starch intake.

3. Use Fat for Sustainable Energy in Horses

Fat provides more than twice as many calories per pound as carbohydrates and can supply a steadier energy source. For horses needing extra calories without increased starch and sugar intake or meal size, equine nutritionists might recommend adding a fat source or selecting a high-fat performance feed.

4. Protein Quality Matters for Performance Horses

Performance horses need adequate digestible protein with the right amino acid balance to maintain and repair muscle. Crude protein percentage alone does not reflect protein quality; digestibility and amino acid balance do. Lysine, in particular, supports muscle maintenance. High-quality protein also supports topline development, especially in performance horses.

5. Replace What Sweat Takes Away

Sweating results in significant electrolyte losses, particularly sodium and chloride. Horses in light work might only need free-choice salt, but horses in intense work or hot climates often benefit from balanced electrolyte supplementation.

6. Protect the Horse's GI Tract Under Pressure

Training, travel, and competition can stress a horse's gastrointestinal system. Maximizing forage intake, limiting large grain meals, and selecting feeds formulated with controlled carbohydrate levels can help support gastric and hindgut health. Even in competition environments, feeding small, frequent meals and providing consistent access to forage can help support your horse's gut health. Maintaining consistency in your horse's diet even while on the road can help to reduce stress to his GI tract when away from the usual routine.

7. Weigh Your Horse's Feed

Do not use a feed scoop as a unit of measurement unless you know exactly what a scoop of your feed weighs. Different feeds vary widely in density, meaning volume-based feeding can unintentionally over- or under-supply nutrients. Weighing your horse's hay and concentrates ensures he receives the nutrients and calories needed to support his workload.

8. Monitor His Body Condition and Topline

Performance horses should generally maintain a moderate body condition score (about a 5 on the Henneke scale). Subtle shifts in weight, muscle tone, or fat cover can indicate your horse's diet might need adjustment.

Workload changes, seasonal shifts, and travel schedules all affect your horse's calorie needs. Regularly reassess your horse's feed program to be sure it's aligned with his current condition and workload.

9. Make Feed Changes Gradually

Sudden dietary changes can disrupt the hindgut microbiome and increase colic risk. When transitioning your horse to a new concentrate feed or forage source, do so slowly over at least seven to 10 days, to allow the digestive system time to adapt.

10. Individualize Your Horse's Nutrition Plan

Just because some horses in the barn perform the same job does not mean they benefit from identical diets.



Metabolism, temperament, and underlying health factors all influence nutritional needs. Collaborate with your veterinarian or an equine nutritionist to refine your performance horse's feed ration based on his individual needs.

Take-Home Message

Feeding the performance horse calls for balance and attention to his individual needs. Prioritize forage, match calories to workload and body condition, support his gut health, and reassess the diet regularly. When nutrition aligns with your horse's training demands, you're both supporting his performance and helping protect his athletic longevity.

The Horse

ALFALFA: IS HAY OR A PELLET PRODUCT BETTER BEFORE RIDING?

Q. I feed my ulcer-prone horse alfalfa before riding, because I've heard the calcium in alfalfa works like a big Tums antacid to keep my horse's stomach from hurting during exercise. I was recently told that alfalfa pellets don't work and that I should use alfalfa hay or chop instead, because the alfalfa needs to create a "hay mat" in the stomach to keep acid from splashing up into a horse's esophagus (basically, causing horse heartburn). Is it true that I need to feed alfalfa hay or chop instead of pellets?

A. You are correct. Alfalfa is typically high in calcium, which researchers have shown reduces stomach acidity due to its buffering capacity. In a study at Texas A&M University, 12 horses were assigned to one of two groups: a 1:1 ratio by weight of Bermuda hay and a concentrate feed of alfalfa hay and the same concentrate feed.

Treatment periods lasted 28 days before horses switched to the other diet with a 21-day washout period between treatments. At the start of the study each horse went through a gastroscopy to determine whether they had gastric ulcers and, if so, their severity. Horses were rescoped after the 28-day treatment periods to determine whether any existing ulcers had improved or worsened or new ulcers had appeared.

The researchers found that ulcer severity scores were significantly lower when horses ate alfalfa hay compared to Bermuda hay. Feeding alfalfa prevented ulcer formation in 11 of 12 horses that did not have ulcers initially, whereas only three of the 12 horses that did not have ulcers stayed ulcer-free when fed Bermuda. The team attributed these results to alfalfa's higher calcium and protein content providing greater buffering capacity. The complex carbohydrate fractions found in alfalfa's cell walls have also been shown to provide better buffering than those found in grass hays.

It's clear that alfalfa does a good job of buffering the acid in the equine stomach. The question therefore becomes, does it matter what form the alfalfa is in? Long-stem hay requires a good amount of chewing before being swallowed, and chewing results in saliva. Equine saliva contains a good amount of sodium bicarbonate, which will also buffer stomach acid. Pellets take less chewing so result in less saliva and lower buffering from the bicarbonate. So long-stem hay would be preferable from that perspective. But what about the fiber mat?

The equine stomach is not completely full of acid. Large feed particles float on top of the acid, helping prevent it from splashing into the upper portion of the stomach where most ulcers occur. Pellets have a much smaller particle size than long-stem fiber, so alfalfa hay is more likely to make a better mat than pellets. Keep in mind that any forage in hay form—not just alfalfa—will form a good mat and cause saliva production. So if your horse has eaten hay within the few hours prior to your ride, he likely already has a good mat.

The calcium in pellets might buffer more quickly than hay due to the smaller particle size, but the smaller particles might also cause the calcium to move out of the stomach faster than larger particles would. So the question becomes: Which is more important, the hay mat or the buffering? If the stomach's acidity is low, it won't matter as much if the acid splashes into the stomach's unprotected upper region. A hay mat is less important when the stomach acid is less acidic, and depending on when your horse last ate hay, a mat might already exist.

If you're arriving to ride your horse and he has an empty stomach, and you give him alfalfa while you're grooming, he might not have time to consume much alfalfa hay, because it requires more chewing. You might get greater buffering capacity more quickly by feeding pellets, although you won't get a great mat. Most stomach buffers are relatively short-lived, lasting at most a couple of hours. Research has shown that some commercial buffers on the market buffer effectively and more quickly than alfalfa. These can be great options when given before exercise, if you need buffering capacity quickly.

Alfalfa's ability to help reduce ulcers, and in which form you should use it, depends on a combination of complex interactions. The best solution for each horse might not be completely clear, but what we do know is that giving some form of alfalfa before riding a horse with an empty stomach will likely have a positive impact and could reduce your horse's risk of developing gastric ulcers.

The Horse

Augusta Co-op Solution

Alfalfa Pellets, 17% Dehydrated, 50 lbs.

Ground alfalfa in a convenient pellet form. Can be added to diet to add extra protein and fiber. Very palatable. Contains 17% crude protein, 1.5% crude fat, and 33% crude fiber.



SKU - ALF17P

4 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW TO PREVENT ENDOCRINOPATHIC LAMINITIS

Manage at-risk horses' diet and exercise to help avoid this painful condition.

Laminitis is an extremely painful condition for horses that can take extensive management to resolve. Therefore, preventing the development of this disease is important for equine welfare. Endocrinopathic laminitis is the most common type of laminitis that originates from a hormonal disturbance or imbalance.

“The term the industry is moving toward to describe this type of laminitis is hyperinsulinemia-associated laminitis (HAL),” says Andy Durham, BSc, BVSc, CertEP, DEIM, Dipl. ECEIM, MRCVS, RCVS, European Specialist in Equine Internal Medicine at Liphook Equine Hospital, in Hampshire, U.K. “This term is more specific, as it is telling you what that hormonal imbalance is.”

Horses that develop HAL can't control their insulin, so they have high circulating blood insulin levels either at rest or when challenged with sugars/starches in the form of a meal or an oral sugar test, adds Amanda Adams, PhD, associate professor at the University of Kentucky's Gluck Equine Research Center, in Lexington. The high insulin levels are what trigger the events in the hoof that lead to laminitis. “It is thought that the insulin binding to the insulinlike growth factor causes stretching and damage to the laminae tissue in the hoof.” Researchers are still working to understand how high the insulin level must be and for how long for HAL to occur.

Understanding how to prevent endocrinopathic laminitis is one of the best ways for owners to ensure better welfare for their horses.

1. Identify Your Horse's Risk Factors

Three main categories of factors make horses more likely to develop HAL: Having PPID (formerly known as equine Cushing's disease) or equine metabolic syndrome (EMS) or being on glucocorticoid drugs (steroids), says Durham. All three of these factors stimulate blood insulin levels and work through the same mechanisms.

“These risk factors are not mutually exclusive,” he adds. “For example, if you have a fit Thoroughbred on glucocorticoids, the risk of HAL is quite low, but if you combine these risk factors and have an EMS pony on steroid medication, that risk will be much higher.” Identifying these risk factors early can be key to mitigating risk. Adhere to the following recommendations if you know your horse is at risk.

2. Reduce Your Horse's Risk

Maintaining your horse's healthy body condition and a diet low in nonstructural carbohydrates (NSCs) can reduce some of the risk. An active horse is at a decreased risk of HAL, says Durham. Therefore, if you have an obese horse that could be at risk for developing insulin dysregulation (ID), our sources recommend adapting his diet and increasing exercise before serious health consequences arise. Consult your veterinarian and equine nutritionist to develop an optimal plan for your horse if you suspect he is at risk of HAL.

Horses suffering from HAL need to be managed to lower their blood insulin levels. “This is not a one-size-fits-all; it will vary for each individual case,” says Adams. “Start with diet changes and exercise, provide a low-nonstructural-carbohydrate diet, remove the horse from pasture, add exercise, and consider additional dietary restriction if required.” For dietary management, she recommends consulting an equine nutritionist who has experience managing horses with insulin dysregulation.

3. Test Insulin Levels Regularly to Prevent Endocrinopathic Laminitis

“The favored explanation is that normally insulin does not interfere with the insulin like growth factor receptors in the hoof; however, when you have elevated levels of blood insulin the receptors can be stimulated, which interferes with the laminae and disturbs that laminae attachment,” says Durham.

Thus, practitioners recommend monitoring these horses' insulin levels regularly with bloodwork. “For horses that are at a higher risk of developing HAL, it is a good idea to consider yearly or biyearly wellness exam bloodwork to diagnose insulin dysregulation or monitor insulin levels over time,” says Adams.

The best practice is to rely on blood insulin levels as a guideline to management and not simply focus on a diet that is less than 10% NSCs, adds Durham. If you have a high-risk horse (e.g., overweight, predisposed breed, diagnosed with EMS or PPID), discuss regular testing with your veterinarian.

Sugar does not cause laminitis; rather, insulin does, and because every horse responds to dietary sugar differently, their responses to dietary adjustment will vary, says Durham. Therefore, following that 10% NSC threshold might not be completely reliable. After making dietary management changes, even in consultation with an equine nutritionist, it is optimal to retest blood insulin levels to ensure the updated program has adequately reduced the blood insulin level in that horse, he adds.

“Less than 10% NSC content of the diet for insulin dysregulated horses will work for most, but may not work for all of them; therefore, relying on testing their blood insulin levels to ensure the NSC level of the diet is low enough is ideal.”

4. Consider Pharmacological Treatments

When management changes are not successful, practitioners might recommend pharmacological treatments for reducing the risk of HAL in your horse, says Adams. “These might include levothyroxine, metformin, SGLT-2 inhibitors, or GLP-1 analogues.”

Take-Home Message

Understanding the risk factors of HAL and knowing if your horse is at risk is essential. Although sugar plays a crucial role in insulin release, blood insulin testing is vital when making management changes. Adjusting diet and exercise to promote lower blood insulin levels can make a significant difference in preventing endocrinopathic laminitis in high-risk horses.

The Horse

MANAGING MULTIPLE EASY-KEEPING HORSES

An equine nutritionist explains her approach for a group of horses needing a low-sugar diet that still spend time on pasture.

Q: I manage a small boarding barn and have several easy-keeping horses living together. Are there ways to reduce pasture sugar intake for an entire herd without completely removing them from turnout?

A: Managing easy keepers can be challenging because we want to provide them with the three F’s (forage, freedom, and friends) without causing excess weight gain. To build a practical management program for easy keepers, I recommend having many tools in your toolbox.

The same plan will not work for every easy keeper, so you might have to try different tactics and combine some of them to see what works best for your facility and group of horses.

Increase Your Horse’s Exercise

For sound horses, increasing exercise helps combat weight gain from pasture intake. Aiming for a minimum of 20 minutes of active trot or canter during your sessions five days per week has been shown to be effective at eliciting weight loss. Note that if your horse is not currently in work, you’ll need to slowly work him up to this.

Change Grazing Times

The sugar content in pasture grass changes over the course of a day. If you have an easy keeper, try to avoid the high-sugar times. Allow these horses to graze early in the mornings (about 3-10 a.m.). Avoid the late afternoon and early evening because when plants are exposed to sunlight, photosynthesis occurs, which means the plant is producing sugars. This peaks in the late afternoon, so you want to avoid grazing for at least a few hours after the sun has gone down.

Use a Grazing Muzzle

Grazing muzzles can help limit how much pasture grass easy keepers consume. Plenty of options exist, and finding the right one for a horse often takes some trial and error. Fit matters, and what works for one horse might not work for another.

Slow Hay Intake, Prioritize Quality

If your horses do not live on pasture 24/7, managing their hay intake can help with weight control while still allowing them some grazing time. You can do this with slow-feed nets. If your horses still consume their daily hay allotment quickly, try moving to smaller-hole nets or doubling up the nets.

Also consider the quality of the hay you offer your horse. Hay with a lower nutritional value (relative feed value of about 75-102) can free up more room in the ration for calories from pasture grass.

Take-Home Message

Managing easy keepers on pasture calls for flexibility across the group. No single strategy works for every horse, so most owners combine methods to manage weight while still allowing turnout, movement, and social interaction.

The Horse



Experience the advantages of having local bankers that understand agriculture and put your farm **first**.



TALK WITH A
LOCAL AG EXPERT
TODAY.

TOP
20
AGRICULTURAL BANKS

3RD IN THE
NATION

by Dollar Volume | FDIC, Data as of Q4 2025



1563 Commerce Rd.
Verona, VA 24482

firstbank.com | Member FDIC | EQUAL OPPORTUNITY LENDER

AUGUSTA CO-OP ELITE HORSE FEED

REFER A FRIEND PROMOTION

Are you currently feeding Augusta Co-op Elite horse feed? If so, refer a friend that is not currently feeding Augusta Co-op Elite horse feed and you both earn huge discounts on Augusta Co-op Elite horse feeds. Contact Alisa Berry, Augusta Co-op Equine Specialist today at ABerry@AugustaCoop.com or (540) 294-3630. Scan the QR code now!



COUPON



\$10 Off a \$50 Purchase

COUPON CODE: JUNE26

Cashier must collect coupon at time of use.

Augusta Co-op would like to thank you for being loyal patrons. We are proud to be serving the community.

**COUPON VALID AT ALL
AUGUSTA CO-OP STORE LOCATIONS**

Coupon valid June 1, 2026 through June 27, 2026. Coupon must be present at time of checkout to receive discount. Limit one coupon per customer. Coupon valid for one in-store sales transaction only. Cannot be combined with other coupons, sales or discounts. In-stock items only. Not redeemable for cash. Not valid for feed, seed, YETI, gift card purchases or animal health products.

Purina® EquiTub™ with ClariFly® Premium Self-fed Supplement for Horses

WITH **OUTLAST** **AMPLIFY** **ClariFly**

Gastric support, fly control and high-quality nutrition in a convenient self-fed form

Feed-through Fly Control

Contains **ClariFly**® Larvicide, a feed additive that passes through the horse and is expelled in the manure, where it helps control house and stable fly populations by interrupting their life cycle.

Gastric Support

Formulated with **OUTLAST**® gastric support supplement to support optimal gastric pH.

Bloom and Body Condition

Formulated with **AMPLIFY**® high-fat horse supplement to maintain body condition, shine and bloom.

High-quality Ingredients

Provides essential nutrients typically missing in forage.

Ionophore-free Manufacturing

Made in an ionophore-free facility.

Easy-to-feed supplement for consistent nutrition and seasonal fly control

You can count on our research-backed formula to provide supplemental nutrition, fly control and gastric support in a palatable form designed for multi-horse convenience. High-quality ingredients such as alfalfa, rice bran and flaxseed are paired with cutting-edge technology to help ensure consistent intake and nutrient delivery. The formula also includes ClariFly® Larvicide. This feed additive passes through the horse and is expelled in the manure where house and stable flies lay their eggs, preventing the emergence of adult flies. Feed with confidence knowing Purina® EquiTub™ with ClariFly® is manufactured in an ionophore-free facility and has been tested at the Purina Animal Nutrition Center and in field trials around the country.



FEED GREATNESS®



Mary Louise Kelley

October 21, 1944 – May 27, 2026

Mary Louise Kelley, 81, of Stuarts Draft, passed away on Wednesday, May 27th, 2026 at Augusta Health in Fishersville.

Mary Lou was born in Stuarts Draft, to Mary M. Kelley and Willard M. Kelley on October 21st, 1944. In her spare time, Mary Lou loved to golf, having once scored a hole-in-one. She was also a talented bowler, played in her church softball league, and was a sports fan who enjoyed watching golf and baseball, especially her beloved Dodgers. She also enjoyed traveling, eating out, and she loved her cowboy movie stars.

Mary Lou was a longtime employee of Augusta Co-op Farm Bureau, Inc. in Staunton, working in inventory and ordering for over 20 years.

Her love for her co-workers, customers, and workplace was evident. She was a pillar of dependability and devotion, coming to work through snowstorms, and she had a regimented schedule; lunches out every day and getting her hair done on Thursdays.

Mary Lou will be missed by all, but her Augusta Co-op family, whom she worked with for decades, will miss her presence every day. We will never forget her smile, willingness to assist customers, and most of all, her friendship.

GET TOUGH ON DIGESTIVE CARE

for more *tender* moments

FIBER + PREBIOTICS + PROBIOTICS

The Comfort Care™ digestive health support system is designed to prepare your pet for the adventures ahead.

Exclusive signature

Exclusive Pet Food Sale - June 8-30, 2026

30 lb. bags \$10 off

15 lb. bags \$5 off

EVENTS / CALENDAR

FRIENDS & FAMILY DAYS

June 25, 26, and 27.

During normal store hours.
Staunton store only. In stock items only.



Scan to view event details

Up to 45% off boots & clothing!

Lawn & Garden Sale - Potting Soil, Potting Mix, and more!

FRIENDS & FAMILY

DAYS **JUNE 25-27**

UP TO 45% OFF
SELECT BOOTS & CLOTHING

LAWN & GARDEN SALE



STAUNTON LOCATION ONLY. IN-STOCK
ITEMS ONLY. DURING NORMAL STORE
HOURS. SEE STORE FOR DETAILS.