

# FEEDING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HORSES WITH EQUINE METABOLIC SYNDROME AND AT RISK OF LAMINITIS

A combination of calorie restriction, a low carbohydrate diet and exercise is needed to manage metabolic syndrome.

## 1. Manage Obesity

- Control pasture intake by either using a grazing muzzle or confining the horse to a yard, stable, small paddock or small area of the paddock.
- Exercise horse at a trot or faster pace (once progress of laminitis allows - do not exercise the horse whilst lameness is present).
- Offer low calorie hay - grass hay or straw are ideal and it is best to look for a late cut, mature stalky hay. Rain damaged grass hay may be suitable provided it is not mouldy. Avoid lucerne, clover or oaten hay.
- Ideally test the hay for energy content, nutrient composition and carbohydrate content.
- Offer 1 - 1.5% of the horse's body weight per day in small feeds e.g. total of 4 - 6 kg per day for a 400 kg horse divided into 3 - 4 meals per day or fed using a slow release haynet or hay feeder.
- Lower intakes will result in faster weight loss, however minimum intakes must be maintained to avoid gastrointestinal problems. Intakes can increase when acceptable weight is achieved.
- A low intake vitamin and mineral pellet or powder should be the only supplementary feed.
- KER Gold Pellet is an ideal supplement and is fed at 120g/500 kg B Wt. **KER Nutrequin** is also suitable.
- Thyroid hormone (Thyrol -L) supplementation may help speed up weight loss.

## 2. Manage Insulin Resistance (IR)

- Reduce body weight/control obesity.
- Restrict starch intake from grains and sugar intake from pasture until IR is controlled.
- Select hay with less than 10% non structural carbohydrate content.
- If hay is not tested, soak hay for 30 min in hot water or 60 min in cold water to rinse sugars out. Discard water prior to feeding and feed just after soaking.
- Exercise, metformin, chromium and psyllium may increase insulin sensitivity. Research also supports the use of **KERx EO-3** to regulate glucose levels in horses.
- If the horse is not obese but has IR, offer extra calories in the form of fat and fibre. For example ad lib hay, soaked beet pulp such as **Milne Beeta Pellets**, low starch feeds such as **Pegasus Liberty**, and fats e.g. **KER Equi-Jewel**

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### 3. Prevent recurrence of Laminitis

- Reduce obesity and improve Insulin Sensitivity.
- Manage and maintain hoof health with the help of a Vet and Farrier.
- Feed **KER Bio-Bloom** to increase hoof growth and allow more rapid hoof reshaping after a laminitis episode.
- Feed long chain omega 3 fatty acids from **KERx EO-3** for a glucose regulating and antiinflammatory effect without increased calorie intake. Use 60-120ml/500kg.
- Limit exposure to sugars, starches and fructans.
- Stabilise hindgut ph and bacterial populations by limiting fructan intake from pasture and supplementing with a hindgut buffer **KERx Equi-Shure**.
- Combat oxidative stress by anti-oxidant supplementation with natural vitamin E, such as **KERx Nano E**.

### 4. Other Supplementation

- Give the horse access to rock salt or a salt block.
- Small amounts of chaff may be mixed with supplements to increase palatability and encourage consumption.

For detailed diet advice for an individual horse contact KER on [advice@ker.com](mailto:advice@ker.com) or Milne Feeds WA based equine nutrition advisor Michelle Meylan on 0429 107 790 or [pegasus@milne.com.au](mailto:pegasus@milne.com.au).

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