

## FEEDING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HORSES AT RISK OF GASTRIC ULCERS (EGUS)

### Overview

Equine Gastric Ulcer Syndrome (EGUS) is a condition affecting a large number of horses due to the nature of the equine stomach, and the feeding methods, routines and feedstuffs often used in modern horse management. These recommendations address known risk factors for EGUS and can be used as an aid to management of horses at risk of gastric ulceration or irritation.

### Management is Key

- Allow horses constant access to forage – always offer stabled or yarded horses ad lib hay. Access to roughage to allow continuous movement of fibre through the gastrointestinal tract is beneficial to keep gastric pH at desirable levels.
- Feed lucerne hay as the preferred source of forage. Lucerne has greater buffering properties than grass hay, and has been shown to increase pH in the stomach and reduce severity of gastric ulcers.
- Give a small meal (500g-1kg) of lucerne chaff or hay 30-60 minutes before the horse undergoes any work to provide buffering of acid that is splashed around the stomach during exercise.
- Reduce starch intake by reducing grain intake, feeding a low starch feed and supplying more energy from fat and digestible fibre.
- **Pegasus Liberty** is a low starch moderate energy feed that is useful for horses prone to gastric ulceration. **KER Equi-Jewel** is a high fat stabilized rice bran product that increases the energy supplied by fat and fibre, therefore allowing reduced starch intakes. **Pegasus Liberty** contains beet pulp as a highly digestible super fibre.
- Whilst omega 3 fatty acids are beneficial in most situations, omega 6 fatty acids have been shown to reduce acid secretion in the stomach. For this reason **KER Equi-Jewel**, sunflower seeds and corn oil are preferred fat supplements for these horses.
- To increase energy supplied by digestible fibre by adding highly soluble fibre feeds such as beet pulp.
- Keep concentrate meal sizes small, or intakes slow by including lucerne chaff/hay in grain meals. Feeding up to 5 small meals per day can have a positive impact on EGUS.
- Antacids and gastric coating agents may provide symptomatic relief and work to maintain the horse's appetite. **KER NeighLox** can act as a buffer and provides a protective stomach coating. **KER NeighLox** can be used for horses at risk of ulceration, after treatment with acid suppression drugs or when these drugs can't be used due to withholding periods.
- Many horses with EGUS also have abnormal hindgut function so consider the use of **KER EquiShure** hindgut balancer.
- Keep water available to horses at all times.

### Veterinary Support / Diagnostics

Medical treatment of EGUS such as the use of Omeprazol should be discussed with your veterinarian. Where possible, consider gastric endoscopy as this is the only definitive way to diagnose EGUS.

Detailed diet advice based on the individual horse is an effective management tool for horses prone to EGUS. Contact Milne Feeds' equine nutrition advisor, Michelle Meylan, on 0429 107 790 or [pegasus@milne.com.au](mailto:pegasus@milne.com.au) for dietary advice.

**MILNE** Feeds

Contact our WA based Equine Nutrition Advisor,  
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