

JUNE 2020

BLENDING NATURE AND TECHNOLOGY



IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE – 1. FEEDING FOR WARMTH 2. TESTIMONIALS

FEEDING FOR WARMTH

Loss of weight in winter is always a concern for many owners, and therefore it must be noted that increased energy demands as a result of cold weather and the reduced nutrition of pastures generally means horses need more feed (this includes hay, grazing and concentrate feed) during winter than in summer months in order to maintain body condition.

All warm-blooded animals, including horses, have a critical temperature. This is the outside temperature below which a horse must produce extra heat to maintain its body temperature. This critical temperature varies, depending upon the horse's condition, age and if its adapted to colder temperatures or not.

For mature horses in good condition, who are accustomed to a mild climate the critical temperature may be around 5°C. This means that any environmental temperature drop below 5°C will require the horse to produce extra heat. Mature horses that are unclipped and are accustomed to cold climates may have a critical temperature of as low as -15°C.

It is estimated that young horses, horses in thinner condition, and those that have been stabled and have not developed a winter coat might have a critical temperature of between 5-10°C

These critical temperatures are important as horses require a total feed increase as the ambient temperature falls below the horses critical temperature.

As horses grow a winter coat, they allow their critical temperature to decrease, making them more comfortable at lower temperatures. Wearing blankets obviously has the same effect.

As horses in South Africa are generally adapted to warmer climates, and due to the nutritional drop in grazing and hay over the winter period they generally will require more feed during winter than summer.

Horses exposed to constant chronic cold weather acclimatise to the cold quickly, but horses not used to cooler temperatures typically require 10 – 21 days to adapt to the altered temperature.

Therefore in South Africa it is often useful to adjust feeding before the cold weather sets in.

It might be tempting to increase the horses' daily grain intake because it is the simplest way to add more calories. However, feeding more hay has the added advantage of also helping the horse to stay warm.

Forages such as hay require microbial fermentation in the hindgut to maximize their use in the digestive tract. This isn't a completely efficient process, and fermentation results in energy being lost as heat. This heat helps your horse to stay warm.

When selecting hay look for good quality hay that is clean and dust free. If possible look for more immature hay (characterised by soft stems and a larger portion of leaf matter) rather than overly mature (very stalky with little leaf) as this provides better nutritional value.

This is important during the winter as winter forage often has a reduced quality which means more hay should be provided than in summer to ensure the same calorie value.

Immature, leafy, hay, has a water-holding capacity that more mature hay does not have. Impaction colic can be more common in winter when horses often drink less because of cold water that is not palatable or even water that is frozen and so this can help combat this.

Does it matter what type of hay is fed for warmth?

Not really. Any kind of forage can help keep a horse warm in winter. Less digestible types (more mature cut hays) might result in greater amounts of heat being produced but as mentioned above they might not provide such a good nutritional value.

Because grass hay (Teff, Eragrostis for example) is generally a lower-calorie hay, it can be fed to horses in larger amounts than with Lucerne hay, especially with horses that maintain their weight easily. Horses tend to eat grass hay slower than Lucerne, and so there's the possibility that grass hay will last longer during the night, resulting in a more continuous stream of fuel for the fermentation process.

The bottom line is any type of hay will result in microbial fermentation in the hindgut. It comes down to which is the best type of hay for each specific horse.

Information taken from:

https://thehorse.com/181582/alfalfa-or-grass-hay-which-is-better-for-winter-warmth/?utm_medium=Nutrition+enews&utm_source=Newsletter



Dear Equus

My 8 year old warmblood has suffered from severe colic now and again, mostly as seasons changed. After a "near surgery" experience in September 2019, I researched additional feed options available for my warmblood and what would work best for his digestive system and wellbeing.

I decided to look into your feed as it contained quality fibres and fats meaning I could provide a consistent, healthy and balanced diet for all our horses while maintaining gut health. I would recommend this feed to any horse lover out there.

Helens advice, was thorough and well thought through, and much appreciated. Both my horses have been on the Equus Cool and Perform 12% since October 2019 and I hope that this feed will be available on the market for a very long time to come."

Best regards,

KARIN SACK



KARIN SACK

Dear Epol

I just wanted to let you know that my horse Franlaren Lorenzo is doing so incredibly well on your feeds. He maintains his condition and remains level headed throughout his work. We use the Epol Rider Cubes as well as a small amount of Epol Rider Muesli as I find this provides him with the perfect energy level, especially when doing harder work. I love the fact that I know he is getting all that he needs without having to feed large amounts. Thank you for your help and guidance.

HELEN KOWALCZYK



HELEN KOWALCZYK

For an absolutely free consultation with no further obligation contact our professional consultants to schedule a visit to your yard.

Hannah 073 423 5491 | hannah.botha@rclfoods.com OR **Helen** 083 998 6824 | Helen.Gilfillan@rclfoods.com
OR **Debbie** 076 755 5164 | Debbie.Dick@rclfoods.com