



Suitable for equines prone to gastric ulcers as part of a balanced diet

How does the feed mark help me?

This BETA feed approval mark, developed by the trade association in consultation with the Veterinary Medicines Directorate, makes it much easier for you to select a suitable feed for your horse or pony if you're concerned about EGUS.

• Please note that this BETA feed assurance scheme is designed to support the management of horses and ponies at risk from equine squamous gastric disease. Please seek veterinary advice for the treatment and management of ulcers due to equine gastric glandular disease.

A BETA GUIDE...

to its certification mark for products suitable for horses and ponies prone to EGUS (equine gastric ulcer syndrome)

REDUCE STRESS

Equine Gastric Ulcer Syndrome (EGUS) is a multi-factorial issue with a range of risk-factors, some of which are related to feeding and nutrition. Recent developments have clearly identified two forms of EGUS: Equine Squamous Gastric Disease (ESGD) and Equine Gastric Glandular Disease (EGGD). Whilst a recognised aetiology and recommended management regimes exist for ESGD, less is known about EGGD which is increasingly being recognised as an inflammatory disease.

Stress is a significant risk factor for EGGD and is one reason why the problem can be particularly difficult to resolve. Removing the cause of stress can be

difficult for performance horses in particular, as stress is inherent in their role. Although the risk factors for EGGD are related to stress associated with travelling, competing and pain, advice relating to feeding management is still the same as for ESGD. In addition, it is recommended to keep stress to a minimum such as by giving 2 rest days a week. In consultation with the Veterinary Medicines Directorate, BETA have developed an approval mark to identify those feeds that, by way of their composition, are suitable for feeding to horses prone to or at risk from EGUS. All the approved products must carry specific advice and guidance on their packaging.

GET FEEDING RIGHT

Whilst dietary management cannot prevent or cure either form of EGUS, a suitable diet is essential if any medical treatment and management changes are to be effective.

- ✓ Keep meal sizes small and feed frequently
- ✓ Ideally provide conserved forage ad lib, but never less than 1.5% of bodyweight (dry matter) basis
- ✓ Increasing forage intake will increase chewing time which will increase saliva production helping to naturally buffer stomach acid
- ✓ If appropriate (e.g.

not laminitic) provide as much turnout time as possible

- ✓ Where possible take measures to reduce stress – if your horse has EGGD it is recommended to give 2 days off a week.
- ✓ Adding chopped fibre to each meal may be beneficial for buffering the acid in the stomach
- ✓ Ideally provide some fibre before any intense exercise is carried out to help reduce the risk of acid splashing on the non-glandular part of the stomach.
- ✓ Make sure water is available at all times
- ✓ Avoid feeding straw as the sole forage source

How are gastric ulcers diagnosed?

They are diagnosed by a vet who performs a gastroscopy. This involves inserting a 3m-long endoscope – 1cm in diameter – into the horse's stomach. The process is carried out while the horse is sedated after being fasted for several hours.

INCREASE FIBRE & CHEW TIME

Ad-lib access to hay, haylage and chopped fibre feed allows a horse to eat little and often, as nature intended. This encourages longer chew time, which in turn leads to an increase in saliva production, with its bicarbonate, which helps to neutralise acidity.

APPROVED PRODUCTS

The feed assurance scheme currently has 22 approved feeds. Each has passed a stringent, three-stage application process overseen by an independent auditor. This includes an examination of ingredients, labelling and marketing claims, plus a laboratory analysis, repeated annually.

