

# FEEDING THE VETERAN HORSE

LIZZIE DRURY MSC RNUTR

There are three primary considerations that you should take in to account when feeding your veteran horse;

- a) Ease of chewing
- b) Improved digestibility of nutrients
- c) Increased palatability

## EASE OF CHEWING

Dental problems are common in old horses and frequently result in loss of body condition. Signs that may indicate that your veteran is having problems chewing hay will include 'quidding'. This is when lumps of partially chewed hay will be spat out and left on the floor. If the lengths of the fibres in his droppings are getting longer, then this is another indication that he is not digesting his fibre properly.

Fibre is **ESSENTIAL** to maintaining a healthy digestive system in any horse, old or young. If your horse is unable to cope with chewing his hay you need to offer a more easily chewed form of fibre. Haylage is one alternative as this is usually softer but if even this is difficult, soaked high fibre cubes such as **Saracen Super Fibre Pencils**, mixed with a little chaff and sugar beet can be offered as an alternative to a haynet. Regular six monthly checks from your vet or equine dentist are essential.



**SUPER FIBRE PENCILS** are a great way to increase the fibre content of the diet and they can be easily soaked to form a mash for horses and ponies that have difficulty chewing. The pencils have a low starch and sugar content and are cereal free. Soya oil is used within the pencil to help with skin and coat condition.

**Ingredients:** Oatfeed, Soya Hulls, Wheatfeed, Molasses, Dried Sugar Beet Pulp, Sunflower Extract, Dicalcium Phosphate, Calcium Carbonate, Vitamins & Minerals, Soya Oil, Sodium Chloride

**Fibre 22%    Oil 3.2%    Protein 10.0%    DE 9.8MJ/kg    Starch 9.6%**

## DIGESTIBILITY OF NUTRIENTS

The decreased efficiency of the digestive tract means that your veteran may require a specifically formulated hard feed, such as **Saracen Veteran Mix** or **Saracen Veteran Pencils**, to help him maintain condition. Veteran Mix contains quality protein sources required for protein synthesis, cell renewal, tissue and muscle repair. The inclusion of micronised cereals provides a 'pre-chewed' source of energy to help provide calories for weight gain. Veteran Mix also contains elevated levels of vitamins and minerals and added herbs to help keep the veteran horse healthy.

Remember to feed on a 'little and often' basis and any one meal should be no more than 3lbs for a pony and 5lbs for a horse. This reduces the risk of undigested starch reaching the hindgut, where it is then rapidly fermented by the micro-organisms, thus increasing the risk of digestive upsets e.g. colic and Laminitis. Additionally, Yea-Sacc™ is added to this diet and will help him to digest and utilize the forage part of his diet more effectively, thus helping to maintain his condition.

## FEED THE DIFFERENCE

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**VETERAN MIX/PENCILS** have been designed to meet the requirements of the older horse or pony. Quality protein and the inclusion of antioxidants help combat the effects of ageing. The pencils are also easy to soak and can be made into a mash for those that struggle to chew.

**Ingredients (mix):** Lucerne Pellets, Barley Flakes, Soya Hulls, Soya Flakes, Oatfeed, Molasses, Pea Flakes, Maize Flakes, Vitamins & Minerals, Soya Oil, Herbs, Dicalcium Phosphate

**Fibre 15% Oil 6.5% Protein 14% DE 12.0MJ/kg Starch 16.6%**

## TOP TIPS FOR MANAGING YOUR VETERAN THIS WINTER

- If you do not have one already, invest in a weigh tape and use it on a fortnightly basis to monitor your horse or pony's body condition. Using a weigh tape allows you to be able to pick up any changes in your veterans condition much quicker than by the eye alone.
- Maintain a regular worming programme. Some older horses are more difficult to keep condition on, not because of their age but perhaps as a result of parasite damage over the years.
- Remember that horses loose up to 80% of their feed energy just to keep warm. Make sure that your horse is adequately rugged and if he is living out that he has shelter from the wind and rain.
- Soya oil or vegetable oil is an excellent choice for older horses, except those with liver damage. Fat contains up to 2.5 times more energy than carbohydrates, so it is an excellent method of increasing the energy density of your horse's diet without increasing its volume. A less messy alternative to this would be to use a product like **EQUI-JEWEL®**.



**EQUI-JEWEL®** is pelleted, high oil, stabilised rice bran supplement designed to increase the energy (calorie) density of the whole diet, thereby decreasing the reliance on cereals in the diet. **EQUI-JEWEL®** is also an ideal product to improve topline and condition on your horse.

The essential fatty acids contained in **EQUI-JEWEL®** are necessary for healthy coat and skin condition.

**EQUI-JEWEL®** is fortified with the correct level of Vitamin E and ensures optimum calcium to phosphorus ratio.

**Fibre 13.0% Oil 18.0% Protein 12.5% DE 18.0MJ/kg Starch 15.0%**

**FOR A PERSONALISED FEEDING PLAN FOR YOUR VETERAN, PLEASE VISIT [WWW.SARACENHORSEFEEDS.COM](http://WWW.SARACENHORSEFEEDS.COM) AND COMPLETE OUR SIMPLE AND FREE FEED ADVICE FORM.**

**ALTERNATIVELY, IF YOU WOULD PREFER TO SPEAK TO ONE OF OUR QUALIFIED NUTRITIONISTS FOR SOME IMMEDIATE ADVICE, PLEASE CALL OUR FEED ADVICE LINE ON 01622 718 487**

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