

How to Manage “Easy Keepers” To Prevent Laminitis

Overweight horses, ponies, and minis and those with Equine Metabolic Syndrome/Insulin Resistance

Feeding Recommendations

- For weight loss, feed 1.25-1.5% of body weight in dry matter (12.5-15 lb for 1000 lb horse).
- NSC (starch + sugar) of the total diet should be less than 15%, and ideally less than 10%.

Pasture

- Without a grazing muzzle, a horse on pasture can consume 1.6% of their body weight in 1 hour! Horses eat grass quickly and efficiently when they know their time will be restricted, so a muzzle is needed to slow down consumption.
- Even if a pasture is overgrazed and short, it is not considered “safe”. The bottom 3 inches of the blade of grass holds the majority of the sugar, and stressed grass also stores more sugar.
- Fall grass and stressed pasture (common in summer/winter) are just as dangerous as spring grass.

Grazing Muzzles

- GreenGuard is a good choice for most horses. The price is a bit higher, but it will last more than one season. Tough-1, Thinline, and Best Friend are other good options, but need to be replaced more frequently as the holes become enlarged.
- For horses that try to take their muzzle off, choose a muzzle that has extra straps across the front or those that attach to a breakaway halter. Extra straps can also be added for security.
- Some horses can develop rub sores. Use fleece or duct tape to pad the parts that rub.

Dry Lot

- A dry lot is a great option to allow for turnout and give horses a break from the grazing muzzle.
- Some horses with severe metabolic issues or laminitis may not be able to be on any pasture at all and need to be kept in a dry lot full-time.

Hay

- The only way to determine the NSC (starch + sugar) content of your hay is to have it tested.
- Soaking hay in cold water for 30 minutes will remove much of the sugar if the NSC is unknown.
- Hay should be fed in a slow-feed net so that it lasts longer. Hay Chix is a good brand.
- Triple Crown Safe Starch Forage is a low-calorie, low-NSC (8.7%) all-in-one product.

Exercise is essential for boosting metabolism and helping with weight loss!

Grain

- “Easy keepers” do not need grain to maintain body condition. A small amount of low-NSC (<15%) pellets can be used to mix supplements in if needed.
- Traditional feeds require at least 5lb. be fed to the average horse to achieve the vitamin/mineral amounts advertised on the bag. This is too much for easy keepers. If a grain is fed at lower rate than the label recommendations, an additional vitamin/mineral supplement should be added. This is especially important for horses with restricted hay/pasture/grain.
 - Vitamin/mineral supplement if not getting a full serving of grain: **NutrientWise from Wiser Concepts, vet code WC23016** (or SmartEssentials or Platinum Performance)
- Alternatively, **SafeStarch Forage** can be used to meet vitamin/mineral needs and mix in supplements. If you feed at least 4 pounds of SafeStarch Forage per day, you will not need to feed a separate vitamin/mineral supplement.

See feed chart on back!

Feed Recommendations

Easy Keeper & Metabolic (EMS/ID): Low-NSC <15%, controlled protein, low calorie						
*If feeding below the minimum recommended feeding rate, add a vitamin/mineral supplement						
Feed	NSC (starch+sugar)	Protein	Fat	Fiber	Calories kcal/lb	Feeding rate/ 1000 lb
Triple Crown Lite	10.10%	12%	3%	20%	1,150	2-4 lb
Hygain Meta Safe	6.50%	15%	4%	35%	810	1+ lb
Hygain Zero	5.50%	15%	4%	35%	800	3.5+ lb
Sentinel Care Carb-Guard	10.00%	12%	8%	25%	1,410	4+ lb
Purina WellSolve L/S	11.00%	12%	6%	23%	1,200	6+ lb
Purina Omega Match	12.50%	14%	9%	20%	1,250	2-2.5 lb
Purina WellSolve W/C	13.00%	12%	1%	26%	900	3.5+ lb
Nutrena SafeChoice Special Care	13.00%	14%	7%	17%	1,320	2.5+ lb
Tribute Kalm N EZ	13.50%	14%	8%	20%	1,470	4+ lb

Easy Keeper (not metabolic): Low-NSC, lower calorie						
*If feeding below the minimum recommended feeding rate, add a vitamin/mineral supplement						
Feed	NSC (starch+sugar)	Protein	Fat	Fiber	Calories kcal/lb	Feeding rate/ 1000 lb
Triple Crown Balancer	11.10%	30%	3%	5%	1,266	1-1.5 lb
Triple Crown Balancer Gold	16.30%	14%	5%	15%	1,300	1-1.5 lb
Tribute Essential K	12.50%	28%	6%	7%	1,370	1-4 lb
Hygain Meta Safe	6.50%	15%	4%	35%	810	1+ lb
Hygain Zero	5.50%	15%	4%	35%	800	3.5+ lb
Tribute Wholesome Blends Balancer	15.00%	28%	5%	12%	1,320	1-4 lb
Nutrena Empower Topline Balance	14.00%	30%	5%	8%	1,230	0.8-3 lb
Purina Enrich Plus	15.00%	32%	5%	6%	1,500	1-2 lb
Triple Crown Lite	10.10%	12%	3%	20%	1,150	2-4 lb
Purina Omega Match	12.50%	14%	9%	20%	1,250	2-2.5 lb
Nutrena SafeChoice Special Care	13.00%	14%	7%	17%	1,320	2.5+ lb
Purina WellSolve W/C	13.00%	12%	1%	26%	900	3.5+ lb
Purina WellSolve L/S	11.00%	12%	6%	23%	1,200	6+ lb
Sentinel Simply Lite	16.20%	13%	4%	18%	1,235	1-2 lb
Tribute Kalm N EZ	13.50%	14%	8%	20%	1,470	4+ lb
Hygain Balanced	13.30%	25%	4%	10%	1,020	1+ lb
Triple Crown Low Starch	15.00%	13%	6%	18%	1,428	6+ lb
Purina Miniature Horse & Pony	18.00%	14%	5%	18%	1,275	0.4 lb/100 lb

***Vitamin/mineral supplements:** NutrientWise, SmartEssentials, Platinum Performance