

## FORAGE: HOW MUCH DO I NEED TO FEED OVER THE WINTER?

Dr. Tania Cubitt & Dr. Stephen Duren Performance Horse Nutrition

Forage is critical for horses especially during the winter months. As the microbes in the hindgut breakdown fiber to create energy they also create heat which can serve to help keep your horse warm. In most areas of the North East there is little to no pasture available during the winter months therefore our horses are 100% reliant on us for their forage requirements. A 1000lb horse needs to eat at least 1.5% of its



body weight in forage a day, t h i s equates to

approximately 15lbs of hay.

If you do not feed enough forage to your horse it can lead to a variety of issues including:

- Hindgut Acidosis
- Colic
- Gastric Ulcers
- Cribbing
- Wood Chewing (including fences and trees)
- Behavioral Issues

If we assume that the wintery conditions can last for 5 to 6 months, this equates to approximately 150 to 180 days we need to provide hay or hay alternative to our horses. This equals between 2,250 and 2,700lbs of hay per horse. If you have a boarding operation and have 10 horses we are now looking at approximately 13 tons of hay. If you house closer to 30 horses you are looking at 40 tons of hay!!! If an average small square bale (not compressed)

of grass hay weighs approximately 40lbs you will need about 2025 bales of hay to get 30 horses through the winter!

Storage space for this amount of hay is nearly impossible to find and availability can be scarce. Have you ever thought of substituting some of your hay with a forage extender pellet?

The key benefits to Poulin Grains' Forage Extender Pellet include:

- Easy to Feed
- Easy to haul
- Consistent product
- Guaranteed analysis
- Increased Digestibility
- Low Carbohydrate
- Endless Supply
- Less storage space
- Less Waste
- Less Dust
- Weed Free

If you chose to feed 10lbs of hay per day to your horse and 5lbs of Forage Extender you would only need to source and store 45 bales of hay (assuming 40lb bales; 0.9 ton) along with 18 bags of Forage extender per horse for the duration of the winter.

When managing horses in the winter we typically close the barn to keep everyone warm. This decreases air circulation and increases the dust and leads to more respiratory issues in horses. By including Poulin Grains Forage Extender Pellet you can help decrease circulating dust. Wetting the feed and opening the doors during the day will also help minimize dust.

**Contact your Poulin Grain Feed Specialist to test your hay quality and build a diet for your horse.**

**Toll Free: 1-800-334-6731**

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