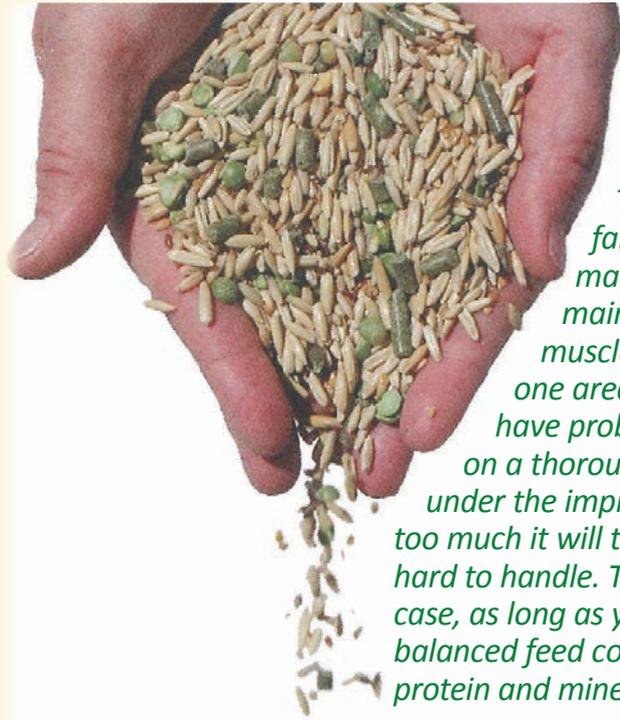


GRACE'S GUIDE...



Thoroughbreds need far more hard feed than many other breeds just to maintain their weight and muscle structure. This is the one area that people seem to have problems with when taking on a thoroughbred. Many are under the impression that if you feed too much it will then become fresh and hard to handle. This is certainly NOT the case, as long as you feed them correctly balanced feed containing the right level of protein and mineral supplements.



At North Farm Stud, the base of HEROS, we feed our own oat-based mix with balanced mineral supplements. My father, Iain Muir (senior), maintains a strong reputation in the racing industry and our feed, mixed on site in a tonne mixer, is the result of many years of family development.

We have horses on box rest who get four feeds a day and keep a sane head, it is most important that the mineral supplement balance in the feed is correct to prevent overheating. Feeding neat oats would create issues in most breeds but the problem with thoroughbreds is that if you under feed them they lose weight very quickly and, before you know it, look very light. It is then much harder to get the condition back on.

Below I have set out a programme, which is only a guide so you can feed alternative equivalents and the quantities can be adjusted

to feeding your Thoroughbred

as you feel necessary when the horse is looking well covered and has good top line condition. At HEROS we feed hard feed all year round, even in the summer if they are turned out full time. Grass is not enough to maintain condition and top line. Even once the correct condition is achieved, we recommend easing back on the hard feed rather than cutting it completely.

Many horses in fields around the country with grass bellies and no top line is through lack of feed not just lack of exercise. We have horses here who have not been ridden for many years but you would never know it. Feeding properly is the key.

I suggest feeding a mix with a balancer included for ease. A good suggestion is **Dodson and Horrell Stud Diet** or **Dodson and Horrell build-up mix**. There are other brands of course and you should look at the protein being around 10-14% when building a horse up. I would always advise against feeding a thoroughbred a pasture or cool mix as, contrary to popular belief, these will not maintain its condition in the longterm.

Additional supplements we recommend are:

- **Blue Chip Dynamic** is a very good joint and bone supplement but you could use an equivalent. Most ex-racehorses benefit greatly from such a supplement for longevity and to overcome the wear and tear they may have got from their athletic life.
- **Blue Chip Pro** builds top line muscle and is also a probiotic,

very good for putting on condition and maintaining general well-being as it contains yea-sac.

- **Oil** – two squirts daily in their evening feed is plenty. Oil aids digestion, which helps stop impactions occurring and keeps their bowels in good working order and coats in good condition.

The best oil to use, in my opinion, is Karron oil (made from linseed) which I have found to be both palatable and exceptionally good. Other options are soya oil or sunflower oil from the supermarket. Two squirts (60ml dose x 2) or about a mugful in the feed daily is about right, but build that up gradually until they get used to the taste.

- **Hoof supplement** (if necessary). If you are not sure ask your farrier.
- **Alfalfa A.** (*This looks like green chop but is a very high form of calcium and roughage*). A handful for breakfast and a double handful at night is the right amount. Some people try to feed it on its own but it has no great nutritional value apart from the roughage and calcium and is not very palatable alone.

It is best to feed breakfast, lunch and dinner if three feeds are necessary. We also do night feeds at North Farm Stud for horses in competition work, little and often being a good option. If the horse is carrying the correct amount of condition then drop the lunchtime feed. If feeding a conditioner do so at dinner time.



Horses benefit from being kept on a joint supplement and some alternatives are Cortaflex and Flex HA by Feedmark – there are several on the market.

- **Apple Cider Vinegar (ACV)** is an extremely good additive. About a mugful is the correct amount and keeps their blood and immune systems in balance.

Condition

Feed your horse enough hard feed to support the exercise he is doing and to increase his condition until he is looking well rounded. After that maintenance will be necessary so you may be able to reduce the amounts slightly.

I am not suggesting that you must use everything listed here but these are the things we use to exceptional effect and can recommend them. Remember – it is much easier to let a thoroughbred get too light than it is to get it carrying the right condition. My guide here is a result of knowledge and adjustment based on experience, in this case, over my lifetime and my father's.