



Myths of Feeding Horses: Separating Fact from Fiction

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#1: My horse needs a bran mash to clean out his system. T or F?

■ FALSE:

- No proof to show that wheat bran has any laxative effects in horses.
- Bran is also not exceptionally high in fiber as many people think (less than oats)
- Can help increase water intake in severe cold climates where water intake is below optimal

#2: You must soak beet pulp before feeding it to your horse. T or F?

■ True- to be safe:

- If feeding beet pulp alone, add water to be safe. No real proof either way.
- If feeding beet pulp based feed, not necessary- fed to millions of horses every day, no problems- possibly due to fact that the beet pulp has already absorbed molasses in feed

#3: Too much protein makes my horse hyper.
T or F?

■ FALSE:

- Absolutely no research to support this claim.
- Protein over emphasized
- Need to differentiate between Energy and Protein.
- Feed too much (any amount of protein) + lack of exercise = hyper horse.

#4: Corn and oats make my horse “hot.”

T or F?

■ Possibly True and False:

- Temperature (FALSE): Hi fiber feeds have higher heat increment b/c it takes more work to digest them. In this sense, hay is more “heating” than grain and grain more heating than fat.
- Mentally (Maybe): Possibly, but most likely due to increase in calories in the form of “energy” and lack of exercise

#5: I can feed corn and/or oats and hay and my horse is completely healthy. T or F?

■ FALSE:

- Both are high in starch
 - Corn: 73% NSC
 - Oats: 54% NSC
 - Research shows higher incidence in colic and laminitis by feeding diets high in sugar and starch
- Effects on mineral balance (Ca:P ratio)
- Cutting with oats- dilution of balanced formula

#6: My horse will choke on pellets. T or F?

■ False, qualified:

- No proof to show that pellets will choke a horse that eats in a *normal manner*
- Some horses “bolt” their feed- eat too fast
 - Ways to combat bolting:
 - Make liquid gruel or mash of feed
 - Feed in shallow feeder, low to ground
 - Add stones/salt brick to feeder – makes them slow down

#7: I feed a red salt block. That's all the vitamin/minerals my horse needs. T or F?

■ FALSE:

- Truly a TRACE MINERAL block
 - less than 1% minerals- really only good for salt intake
- Need to feed a fortified concentrate to make up for inadequate amounts in block
- -OR- Feed actual vitamin/mineral supplement like Equi-Min

#8: Crimped oats are better than whole oats.
T or F?

■ TRUE and FALSE:

- Studies have shown no more than 6% higher digestibility in crimped oats vs. whole oats- not enough to warrant the above statement
- Only instance where may be a factor would be horses with bad teeth and very young horses

#9: Coastal bermuda hay causes horses to colic. T or F?

■ FALSE:

- No evidence to support this belief.
- Any type of hay when put up incorrectly can cause colic

#10: Feeding corn oil will prevent impaction colic. T or F?

■ FALSE:

- Corn oil is highly digestible in GI tract (primarily in small intestine)- will not coat
- Mineral oil is completely indigestible- thus its coating capacity and ability to “grease the chute”
 - Feeding mineral oil over a long period of time may decrease absorption of fat soluble vitamins

#11: Feeds with organic minerals and additives are a waste of money. I have great hay and pasture, I don't need supplemental minerals at all. T or F?

■ FALSE:

□ Actually money well spent

- Studies in other species, being done on horses now
- Organic (chelated) more absorbable than in-organic

□ Insurance

- Supplemental minerals fed free choice or top-dressed
- Offsets variations in hay and/or pasture quality

#12: I feed my horse 2 coffee cans of feed a day, he gets everything he needs. T or F?

■ Maybe, maybe not:

- How much does that coffee can full of feed weigh?
- FEED BY WEIGHT NOT BY VOLUME.
- Feed according to manufacturer's feeding directions. If feed less than recommended amount, vit/min requirements are NOT being met.

#13: My 15 year old horse needs to be on a senior feed. T or F?

■ Maybe, maybe not:

□ What defines a Senior horse? A set age? NO.

□ A “Senior” Horse:

- Dentition problems (teeth missing, damaged, or worn)
- Intestinal damage: parasite; decreased absorptive capacity
- Inability to maintain weight/condition

#14: All manufactured feeds are the same.
One is just as good as the other. T or F?

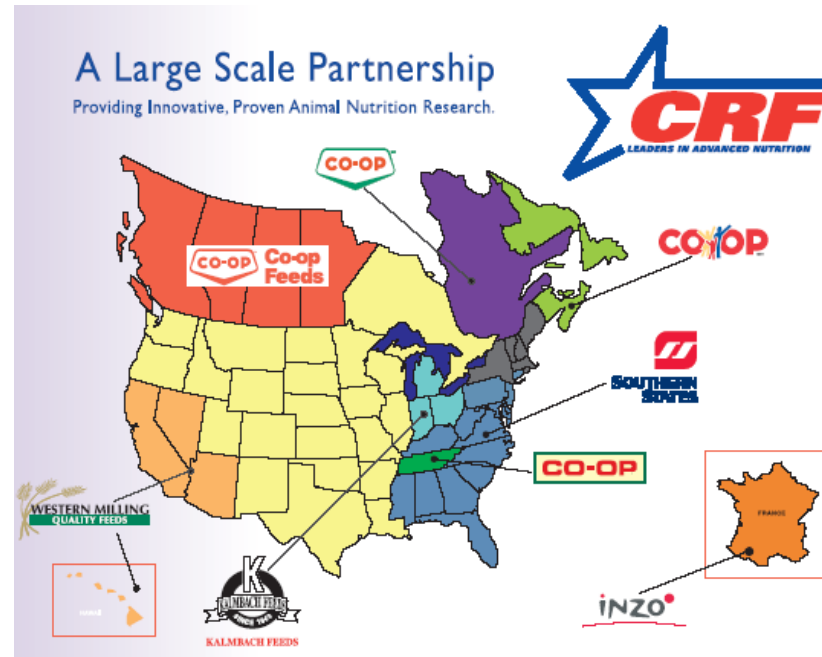
■ FALSE:

- Absolutely not. Look at the feed tag.
- What about quality control at the feed mill?
- Guaranteed analysis. How many and what?
- Fixed ingredients vs. Least Cost

Southern States: Research Based Feeds

- Cooperative Research Farms (CRF):

- Unbiased
- Well-Founded
- Cost Effective
- Truly Beneficial



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