



Feeding trends 2018

Whether or not to feed a horse grain is a question many horse owners are concerned with, as cereal-free feeding has evolved from being a medical necessity in case of specific illnesses into a kind of trend. Let's take a look at the facts: Is grain good or bad for our horses? And what do the other trends "sugar/molasses-free" and "amino acids" have to do with grain-free feeding?

Cereals, especially oats, are the traditional feed for our horses and normally very well tolerated. Barley and maize can also be optimally digested by our horses, provided that they have been processed, e. g. by hydrothermal treatment of the starch. If the feeding is in compliance with the recommendations given by the GfE (Gesellschaft für Ernährungsphysiologie; Association for Nutritional Physiology) in 2014 regarding the relation between the intake of starch and the performance of the horse, grain is still a healthy source of energy. So grain does not per se make our horses ill.

It's the quantity of grain that counts

If there is a mismatch between energy consumption and feed quantity, however, or if the horse suffers from a metabolic disease, grain should be avoided. Beside genetic factors and the age of a horse, the main cause for illnesses like insulin resistance, nutrition induced laminitis, EMS (Equine Metabolic Syndrome), PSSM (Polysaccharide Storage Myopathy) or ECS (Equine Cushing's Disease) is an increased Body Condition Score (BCS). If you are toying with the idea of feeding your horse a grain-free diet, you should always consider carefully whether there is a specific

reason to do so. If there is, a switch to grain-free feeding should take place.

Otherwise, there is nothing wrong with feeding grain.

Is molasses equivalent to sugar?

Like grain-free feeding, molasses-free feed has become very popular, but again we should ask ourselves why it is important to us to refrain from feeding our horses molasses. Molasses is often equated with sugar. Molasses does contain sugar, of course, but only a small amount, as the granulated sugar has largely been dissolved out. Furthermore, molasses brings vitamins, minerals, trace elements and phytochemicals into the feed ration, binds the feed together, cutting down dust, and is a flavour carrier. So there are many reasons not to demonise molasses per se. If a horse is to be fed a low-sugar diet, the amount of starch contained in the fodder must also be taken into account, because starch is metabolized into sugar by the horse's organism. Generally, of course, any kind of sugar should be fed in moderation and in proper relation to the amount of work a horse engages in. With horses suffering from insulin resistance, EMS or Cushing's Disease particular caution should be exercised, as they quickly develop acute laminitis in response to an intake of sugar-rich grass or cereal-based concentrates that are rich in sugar or starch.

Proteins in cereal-free rations

It is important to make sure that every grain-free ration contains a sufficient amount of easily-digestible proteins. This leads us to feeding trend number three. The rumour that laminitis is caused by proteins persists even though modern science negates that such a correlation exists. Apart from overburdening and blood

or intestinal poisoning, sugar is the main cause for fits of founder. Proteins and their building blocks (amino acids) are essential to life and a deficiency quickly manifests itself in a weak musculature despite sufficient training. The essential amino acids lysine, methionine and threonine are of particular importance: If they are not available, all the other essential amino acids cannot be metabolized either. An uptake of lysine, methionine and threonine is only possible through the fodder. In order to avoid burdening the horse's metabolism with unusable protein, however, it is important to focus on the amount of raw protein with precaecal digestibility (i. e. protein that can be absorbed in the small intestine) contained in a fodder rather than on the total amount of protein. Horses are solely dependent on the types of amino acids that can be absorbed in the small intestine. All the others remain unused, move on into the large intestine and need to be metabolized there, putting a strain on the horse's body.

Conclusion

The three trends "grain-free, sugar-free and protein-rich feeding" we have become aware of in conversations with people calling our feed counselling line cannot be viewed in isolation. That is why we always enquire about specific reasons such as medical necessity, feeding condition and training in order to assemble a suitable ration for the individual horse.

Our recommendations:

marstall Faser-Light – the grain-free, pre-biotic light feed!



marstall Faser-Light is a grain-free muesli that is low in sugar, starch and energy, while containing all the important vitamins and minerals a horse needs. It is rich in fibres that satisfy the horse's need for chewing and stimulate salivation. As a cereal-free, low-energy muesli, Faser-Light benefits good doers as well as horses with stomach problems or metabolic disorders.

marstall Vito – a special grain-free food stuff for horses having problems!



Optimized according to scientific advice, Vito, which belongs to marstall's grain-free line, is ideal for horses with metabolic problems such as EMS, PSSM, Cushing's Disease or ER (Equine Exertional Rhabdomyolysis). It is rich in energy, omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin E, zinc and selenium. As a grain-free feed with a high energy level, Vito is ideally suited as a stomach-friendly, low-sugar diet for sport horses, bad doers and senior horses.

marstall Bergwiesen-Mash – the grain-free, easily digestible mash!



Thanks to its high level of prebiotic Previta-Fiber[®], marstall BergwiesenMash is easily digestible. It is grain-free and low in sugar. Mountain Meadow Mash protects the horse's digestive system and is particularly beneficial for horses that are sensitive to stress. It can be stirred into cold or warm water and is a blessing for horses in summer and winter. marstall Mountain Meadow Mash is ideal for horses with a sensitive metabolism.

If you have questions about horse feeding in general or about stomach/intestines/digestion in particular, you may call our free-of charge counselling line: +49 - 83 86 - 93 33-15 (Mo - Fr 7am - 5pm). You may also send an email to info@marstall.eu.