

What eventing horses need from horse feed

Eventing horses require **horse feed** that backs training, competition, recovery, and day-to-day health. The best ration is not simply the one with the highest calories; it is the one that meets the horse's **energy** needs while keeping the digestive system steady, the temperament manageable, and the body in good **condition**.

For most **eventing horses**, the foundation should be a **forage-based diet**. Good quality **forage** delivers **digestible fibre**, which is the safest long-term fuel source for horses in regular work. Fibre helps with **gut health**, encourages chewing, and helps maintain a calmer, more reliable supply of **slow-release energy**. That matters for a **performance horse** that must stay focused across dressage, cross-country, and show jumping.

Event horses also require enough **protein** for **muscle development**, enough **calories** to avoid losing weight, and the right balance of **vitamins and minerals** to support recovery, hoof quality, and immune function. If the horse sweats heavily, **electrolytes** and good **hydration** become especially important. In practice, the best **horse feed** for eventing tends to be one that builds **stamina** without creating excess fizz.

A useful way to think about feeding event horses is this: feed the horse for **performance nutrition**, not just appetite. A horse that appears well fed but lacks top-line, loses weight in work, or becomes sharp and difficult may need a different balance of roughage, energy sources, and supplementation.

Types of horse feed and how they work

There are a number of **types of horse feed**, and each has a different effect. The main choice is usually between roughage, **hard feed**, and mixed feeds such as chaff, cubes, nuts, and blends. The right mix depends on the horse's workload, body type, and response to feed.

Hard feed is a wide term that includes cereals, compound feeds, cubes, and mixes. It is often used to provide extra calories, protein, and vitamins when forage alone is not enough. Some hard feeds are designed for gradual, consistent conditioning, while others provide faster energy release.

Chaff is chopped forage, often with added oil or molasses. It is beneficial [overweight horse feed](#) because it increases chewing time and can slow the rate of eating. Chaff can also improve **palatability** and help carry supplements through the bucket. For many eventing horses, chaff is an important part of feeding management because it supports roughage intake while making the ration more practical.

Oats remain a traditional energy source, and some horses thrive on them. They can provide a useful energy lift, but they are not ideal for every horse because they may be higher in **starch** and can produce a hotter response in sensitive animals. For that reason, oats suit some horses in intense work but are not automatically the best choice for every event horse.

Other ingredients frequently used in event horse diets include beet pulp, oil, and fibre-based cubes or pellets. These can improve digestibility and provide energy in a more controlled way than high-cereal rations. The ideal mix depends on the individual horse rather than on trends alone.

Is complete horse feed a smart fit for eventing?

Fully balanced horse feed can be an ideal option for some eventing horses, especially if you want a more straightforward feeding system. A true complete feed is designed to provide a **balanced ration** in one ration,

often blending fibre, energy, protein, **vitamins and minerals**, and sometimes oil. For horses that are picky eaters or difficult to keep in condition, that can be [buy laminitis feed](#) especially helpful.

The main advantage is convenience and consistency. If the feed is formulated well, it can reduce guesswork and help maintain a suitable **condition score**. That can be particularly helpful when you are juggling training, travel, and competition schedules. A complete feed can also support horses that need a controlled starch level, since many modern versions focus on fibre and oil rather than cereal-heavy formulations.

However, complete feed is not automatically the best answer for every horse. Some eventing horses do better on a forage-first plan with a **ration balancer** or separate supplement, especially if they already get enough calories from hay or haylage. If a horse holds weight well, a lighter ration may be enough. If a horse needs more calories, muscle support, or better cover, a complete feed may be a stronger match.

The key is to examine the label and the **feed analysis**. Compare digestibility, protein level, oil content, fibre source, starch, and sugar. A feed that looks like a complete ration on paper still needs to suit the horse's temperament, workload, and current condition. In other words, the best complete feed is the one that genuinely suits the horse rather than the one with the loudest marketing.

How to choose horse feed for beginners

If you're looking for **horse feed for beginners**, begin with the basics: assess the horse's current **bodyweight**, overall condition, work level, and access to **forage**. New owners often focus too much on energy feeds and not enough on whether the horse is already getting enough roughage. A good feeding plan should first begin with forage quality and quantity.

Build a simple **feeding routine** and keep it as consistent as possible. Horses do best when their meals are offered at roughly the same times each day. Consistency supports gut function, reduces stress, and makes it simpler to notice changes in appetite or droppings that could signal a problem.

For a horse in light work, forage may do most of the job. For an event horse in regular training, you may need to add a fibre-based conditioning feed, a balancer, or a performance mix. The best approach is to raise calories gradually and monitor the horse's coat, behaviour, and top line over time.

If you are uncertain where to begin, think in this order:

- Check forage quality and intake first.
- Track body condition and weight regularly.
- Tailor feed to **workload**, not just breed or size.
- Add energy from digestible fibre and oil before relying heavily on starch.
- Reassess the ration whenever training intensity changes.

That method makes horse feeding much easier for beginners and helps avoid overfeeding, underfeeding, or sudden changes that upset the digestive system.

Feeding rules for horses for every event rider to follow

Careful **horse feeding rules** help make eventing management safer and more efficient. Many riders use an adapted version of the **10 rules of feeding horses**, even if they do not call them that. The specifics may vary, but the core principles are consistent: safeguard the gut, avoid big feed swings, and keep forage central.

To begin with, provide ample roughage and avoid long gaps without forage. Second, feed **small meals** rather than large buckets that overload the stomach. In addition, keep **fresh water** available at all times, especially around travel, training, and competition. Lastly, make any diet changes gradually over several days or longer.

Additional important horse feeding rules include:

- Feed for the horse's current **workload** and body condition, not for an idealised plan.
- Avoid relying on one ingredient to fix every issue.
- Make cereal-based meals sensible if the horse is sharp or prone to digestive upset.
- Promote recovery with forage, hydration, and electrolytes after hard efforts.
- Monitor manure, appetite, attitude, and body shape for early warning signs.

These rules matter because event horses often face fluctuating training intensity. A calm dressage schooling week may require a different feeding approach than a demanding cross-country phase. Feed management should follow the horse's workload, not just a fixed routine set months ago.

How to read a horse feeding chart

A **horse feeding chart** helps convert feeding decisions into a clear plan. It is not a substitute for professional advice, but it is a valuable reference for matching the ration to the horse's **body condition score**, **workload**, and **forage intake**.

Begin by judging whether the horse is lacking condition, ideal, or too heavy. Then evaluate how much work the horse is doing each week and how intense that work is. A horse doing light flatwork needs a much different intake from a horse working hard in regular schooling, galloping, and jumping sessions.

When using a chart, check:

- The amount of forage is fed each day.
- Whether the ration provides enough calories for the current workload.
- Whether the horse needs more protein for muscle development.
- Whether the horse is getting enough vitamins and minerals.
- Whether the feed supports a steady, manageable temperament.

A chart is especially helpful when it ties feed choices to outcomes. If the horse is dropping condition, the chart should indicate increasing calorie density or forage intake. If the horse is too sharp, you may need to cut back on starch and increase digestible fibre or oil.

How much horse feed does an eventing horse need?

The portion of **horse feed** an eventing horse needs varies with build, temperament, forage access, and **workload**. This is where a **horse feed calculator uk** can be helpful, but it should just be a starting point. Such calculators can estimate daily intake, yet they cannot fully assess how the horse looks, feels, and performs.

A reliable estimate begins with **bodyweight** and forage intake. Then you add concentrated feed only if the horse needs additional calories, protein, or micronutrients than forage alone can provide. Certain horses in moderate work maintain well on forage plus a balancer. Others need a full performance ration, especially if they struggle to hold condition or are doing more demanding work.

If you use a **horse feeding chart** alongside a calculator, you can weigh up expected intake with actual results. Is the horse losing weight? Is the coat dull? Is recovery slow? Is energy inconsistent? These are more meaningful than simply feeding a fixed number of scoops.

For eventing horses, the goal is usually to keep the horse fit, fuelled, and mentally settled. That often means enough roughage, controlled energy, and regular adjustment based on training. A horse that is too lean may lack strength and stamina; a horse that is overfed may become uncomfortable or difficult to ride. Balance matters more than bulk.

How much does horse feed cost?

Horse feed cost depends on the brand, kind of feed, sack size, and how many kilos the horse eats per day. A lower **bag price** does not always mean lower overall cost, because a more concentrated feed may be fed at a lower rate. That is why it is better to look at **daily feeding cost** rather than the bag price alone.

To compare value, consider how much of the feed the horse actually needs each day. If one feed is inexpensive but requires a large feeding rate, it may cost more in the end than a higher-priced feed that is more nutrient-dense. This is especially relevant when comparing **horse feed companies**, because different brands may use different formulations, ingredient quality, and recommended intakes.

Also take into account the cost of forage, balancers, supplements, and electrolytes. A ration that looks cheap may become expensive if it still needs multiple add-ons. A more complete formula may be the smarter choice if it meets the horse's needs in fewer products.

The most practical way to assess cost is to calculate monthly feeding cost based on the horse's actual ration. That gives you a practical comparison between feeds and helps you choose the most efficient option for the horse's workload and condition.

Should you choose branded feed like Spillers?

Spillers horse feed is one example of a branded option many riders consider for eventing. Branded feeds can be useful because they often come with clear feeding instructions, a stated **nutritional analysis**, and a range of products for different levels of work. For many riders, that makes feed management easier.

Well-known **horse feed companies** typically offer specialised **performance feed** products, including low-starch, high-fibre, conditioning, and balancer options. That variety can help you tailor the ration to the horse's exact needs. The benefit is not the brand name itself; it is whether the product truly suits the horse's present condition and workload.

Prior to selecting any branded feed, review the formula and nutrition profile. Look for digestible fibre sources, suitable oil content, sensible starch and sugar levels, and a mineral profile that fits the rest of the diet. If a feed supports steady energy, recovery, and muscle condition without making the horse sharp, it may be worthwhile for the price.

Name-brand feeds can also make for feed management simpler for busy riders because the instructions are easy to follow. Even so, being simple should never replace careful observation. Keep checking the horse's body condition, behaviour, and performance response.

Can you make a horse feed mix recipe?

A home-prepared **horse feed mix recipe** can be effective if you grasp the horse's nutritional needs and ensure the ration well-balanced. Many riders use a mix of forage, chopped straw, **beet pulp**, **pellets**, and **oils** to create a conditioning diet that promotes slow-release energy and gut well-being.

Beet pulp is especially valuable because it provides digestible fibre and can be a good source of calories without relying heavily on starch. Oil can raise calorie density and help with coat condition while keeping the diet cooler. Pelleted feed can add structure, protein, and vitamins, depending on the product used.

However, a home mix should still provide a proper proportion of **vitamins and minerals**. When you build a ration solely from ingredients without ever considering micronutrients, you may create shortages or surpluses. That is why, many owners match a custom mix with a supplement or supplement formulated to round out the ration.

If you are interested in making your own mix, begin with a vet or nutritionist-approved plan. The aim is not to invent a novel recipe; the purpose is to build a sensible ration that suits the horse's workload, temperament, and digestion. A self-made approach can work well, but only when it is handled carefully.

Horse feeding advice: what to avoid in event horses

Helpful **horse feed advice uk** typically starts with the mistakes to avoid. Performance horses should not make abrupt feed changes, too much cereal feeding, long stretches without forage, and rations that take starch too high for the horse's nature or gut tolerance.

Starch and **sugar** are not necessarily bad, but an overload can create unhelpful excitability, uneven energy, or gut strain. Horses that are prone to behaviour, tying-up risk, or gut sensitivity often do better on a low-starch, fibre-led ration with measured energy from oil and digestible fibre.

Another major risk is poor feed management around travel and competition. Changes in water intake, meal timing, and exercise routine can unsettle the gut and heighten the likelihood of **colic**. Preserve routine where possible, offer water frequently, and avoid feeding large meals immediately before hard work.

Also avoid over-supplementing without checking the full ration. A horse can receive an excess of one nutrient while still lacking another. The safest route is a carefully balanced plan that considers forage, hard feed, work, and body condition together.

FAQs about horse feed for eventing horses

What horse feed is best for eventing horses?

The best **horse feed** for eventing horses is usually forage-based, with added digestible fibre, sensible calories, and balanced **vitamins and minerals**. Many horses do well on a fibre-based conditioning feed, a balancer, or a complete feed that supports slow-release energy and a calm, athletic frame.

Should eventing horses be on complete horse feed?

Complete horse feed can be a good choice for some eventing horses, especially if you want a straightforward **balanced ration** with fewer extra products. It is not essential for every horse, though. If forage already covers much of the diet, a balancer plus targeted feeds may work equally well.

How much horse feed should an event horse get each day?

The right amount depends on **bodyweight**, **workload**, forage access, and body condition. Use a **horse feed calculator uk** and a **horse feeding chart** as guides, then adjust based on the horse's condition score, appetite, and performance. The horse should stay in good condition without becoming sharp or overweight.

How can I calculate horse feed monthly feed cost?

To work out **horse feed cost** each month, multiply the daily feeding amount by the price per kilo, then use 30 as the monthly total. Include the cost of roughage, supplements, and any extras. Checking daily feeding cost is often more useful than comparing **bag price** alone.

Which are the main horse feeding rules for competition horses?

The main **horse feeding rules** are to provide plenty of hay, feed **small meals**, keep **fresh water** on hand, change diets gradually, and tailor feed to **workload**. Effective feeding management also means keeping an eye on body condition, maintaining gut health, and avoiding too much starch or sugar.