

When you're wondering what horse feed is grain free, the quick answer is any horse feed made without cereal grains such as oats, barley, maize, or wheat. Such feeds are usually designed to be **lower in starch, sugar low**, and **fibre rich**, with a greater focus on **forage-led** nutrition. That is why they are a popular choice for horses that need a calmer, more controlled diet, especially where **digestive wellbeing** or **laminitis risk** is a concern.

Feeding without grain does not mean "no energy" or "all hay and nothing else". A good grain-free **horse feed** can still be **nutritionally balanced** and suitable for leisure horses, **performance horse diets**, and horses that need careful **calorie intake** management. The key is knowing the different **feed options**, reading the **feeding label** properly, and choosing the right **day-to-day ration** for your horse's **body condition** and workload.

What does grain-free horse feed mean?

Grain-free horse feed is feed that steers clear of traditional cereal grains as the main ingredient. Instead of using starch from oats or barley, it uses ingredients such as chopped fibre, grass nuts, alfalfa, beet pulp, oil, and added **vitamins and minerals**. In many cases, this makes the feed more suitable for horses that do best on a **high fibre** diet.

Among the many **types of horse feed**, grain-free options sit with mixes, cubes, pellets, chaffs, balancers, and full ration feeds. Some are **complete horse feed**, meaning they are designed to supply the full nutritional package when fed **low starch balancer** as directed. Others are straights or supplements that must be paired with **forage** such as **hay** or **haylage**.

A grain-free diet is often selected because the horse's **digestive system** is better suited to fibrous feeds than to large amounts of starch. That can support **hindgut health**, steadier behaviour, and improved **digestibility**. However, grain-free does not automatically mean suitable for every horse, and it does not replace the need for careful feeding management.

What horse feeds are usually grain free?

Numerous **horse feed companies** now sell grain-free products, from basic fibre blends to fully fortified products. Brands such as **spillers horse feed** include a range of feeds suited to different needs, including low starch, low sugar, and fibre-first formulas. This also applies across other producers that focus on performance, leisure, and condition-building products.

Common grain-free **types of horse feed** include:

Bifid UK

+44 800 422 0888

sales@bifid.co.uk

<https://bifid.com/uk/>

- **Complete horse feed** made to replace or reduce the need for additional hard feed
- **Conditioning feed** for horses that need weight gain or improved topline
- Low starch balancers and ration builders
- Fibre cubes and pellets made from beet pulp, alfalfa, or grass
- Oil-rich feeds that boost energy without adding grain

Many of these feeds are marketed as ideal for horses that need a calmer diet, better **digestive health**, or help maintaining a steady **body condition**. Some are specifically aimed at horses with metabolic sensitivity, while others are intended for active horses that need extra fuel without a heavy cereal load.

When comparing products, do not rely on the front of the bag alone. A feed may be grain free, but still contain plenty of **sugar** or enough **starch** to matter for a sensitive horse. Always check the analytical constituents and ingredient list before deciding.

Is grain-free feed right for all horse?

Not always. Good **horse feeding rules** are based with the idea that the horse is an individual. A grain-free plan can be ideal for one horse and unfitting for another. That is why **horse feed for beginners** advice usually begins with the basics: know the horse's weight, workload, temperament, forage access, and health history before selecting a feed.

Under standard **horse feed advice uk**, the first question is usually whether the horse needs hard feed at all. Many horses do well on **forage** alone, especially if they are easy keepers. Others need a grain-free hard feed to deliver extra nutrients, support condition, or help with training and work.

Grain-free feed may be a good idea if your horse:

- Is a **good doer** and puts on weight easily
- Has had **laminitis** or is considered at risk
- Needs a **low starch** diet for behavioural or digestive reasons
- Needs extra fibre rather than cereal energy
- Struggles with large amounts of traditional hard feed

It may be less suitable if the horse needs very high energy intake and cannot hold weight despite generous forage and an appropriate **complete horse feed**. In these cases, you may need a more concentrated solution, potentially still grain free, but carefully chosen for energy density and nutrient profile.

How to inspect labels for grain-free ingredients

Reading labels is one of the most important skills in selecting grain-free **horse feed**. A feed can say "grain free" but still include ingredients that contribute considerable **sugar** or **starch**. First with the ingredient panel, then move to the nutritional analysis, and finally compare that information with the feeding directions.

Watch for:

- An obvious note that the feed is grain free
- Reduced **starch** and **sugar** levels
- A fibre-rich ingredient list
- Supplemented **vitamins and minerals**
- Instructions for the total **daily ration**

Quality ingredients often include alfalfa, beet pulp, grass, linseed, soya hulls, vegetable oil, and other fibrous sources. These help provide to a more **forage based** formula. If the feed is a **complete horse feed**, it should state that it can cover requirements when fed at the recommended amount. If not, it may need to be paired with a **balancer** or additional supplementation.

A **horse feeding chart** can help you compare the feed against your horse's size and workload, but it should be used together with the label rather than instead of it. For horses with special needs, especially those prone to **laminitis**, a diet review is more important than marketing terms.

Do grain-free diets also provide enough energy?

Yes, grain-free diets may provide enough energy for many horses. What matters most is understanding the difference between energy from starch and energy from fibre and oil. A grain-free feed often uses fibre fermentation and fat as the main **energy source**, which can promote steady performance and better **digestive system** function.

For owners using a **horse feed calculator uk**, the goal is usually to match the feed to the horse's weight, workload, and condition without overfeeding calories. This helps prevent unnecessary weight gain while still supporting exercise, recovery, and overall health. The calculator can be a useful starting point, but it cannot replace practical assessment of **body condition** and behaviour.

Grain-free diets may also affect **horse feed cost**. Some fibre-rich and specialised feeds are costlier per bag than basic mixes, but the true cost depends on how much is fed, how concentrated the product is, and whether it replaces other components in the ration. A more expensive bag may last longer if the feed is highly concentrated and fed in smaller amounts.

A well-formulated **complete horse feed** can still supply enough energy for work, provided it is fed according to the manufacturer's **feeding guide**. For horses with higher demands, energy may be increased through additional forage, oil, and a carefully selected conditioning product rather than cereal grains.

Grain free feeding options by type of horse

Different horses need different feeding strategies, and that is where useful **horse feed advice uk** comes in handy. An easy **horse feeding chart** can help owners pair feed type to workload, but it should always be adjusted for temperament, condition, and health history. For **horse feed for beginners**, the most sensible approach is to start with forage, then build the ration only if needed.

For good doers and overweight horses

Good doers usually respond well on controlled rations and plenty of low-calorie **forage**. For these horses, horse feeding rules often focus on keeping **calorie intake** down while maintaining chewing time and digestive comfort. A grain-free option can be effective here because it often supports a **high fibre**, low **starch** approach.

Rely on the **horse feed calculator uk** as a guide, then assess bodyweight regularly and adjust. Do not use overfeeding conditioning products, even if they are grain free, because some still supply concentrated energy. For many good doers, a balancer with measured forage and a small amount of fibre feed is enough.

For horses that struggle to hold weight and working horses

Lean horses and horses in heavier work may need a more generous ration. In these cases, a **complete horse feed** can be a practical option because it provides a nutrient-dense base without having to build a complicated mix from scratch. Some owners also use a home-made **horse feed mix recipe** to combine fibre, oil, and additional digestible calories.

For a **performance horse**, grain-free feeding can still support training if the ration is well planned. The most important factors are digestibility, fibre quality, and enough energy to maintain condition and recovery. A

sensible mix may include a high-quality fibre feed, oil, and a balancer to cover **vitamins and minerals**.

How much does grain-free horse feed cost?

Horse feed cost varies a lot depending on presentation, nutritional concentration, and brand. When people ask **how much does horse feed cost**, the honest answer is that it depends on the feed's density and how much your horse actually needs daily. Grain-free products often are more expensive per bag than basic cereal mixes, but they may be fed in smaller quantities.

Several factors influence the final price:

- Whether the product is a **complete horse feed** or a supplement
- The standard of fibre and fat sources
- Added nutrients and targeted wellbeing support
- Brand positioning from **horse feed companies**
- How much is needed in the **daily ration**

It may help to weigh the cost per day rather than cost per bag. A more concentrated feed may look expensive, but if it replaces several other items in the diet, the overall **horse feed cost** may be manageable. Always figure feeding by the recommended amount, not by the front-label claim.

Can you prepare a grain free horse feed mix at home?

Certainly, but it should be done with care. A home **horse feed mix recipe** can be helpful for owners who want control over ingredients, but it is simple to create an imbalanced ration if you do not account for **vitamins and minerals**, fuel, and protein. Not all **types of horse feed** are ideal for DIY formulating, especially if the horse has health concerns or specific dietary requirements.

A lot of horse owners blend chopped fibre, beet pulp, linseed, oil, and a balancer. But, this is only sensible if the entire feed ration remains **nutritionally balanced**. If you create your own mix, compare it with reputable feeds from **horse feed companies** and be certain you are not lacking key nutrients.

The biggest issue with home-mixed feeds is thinking grain free automatically means healthy or sufficient. Without proper planning, a feed can be too low in protein, too heavy in **sugar**, or missing in crucial trace minerals. If you are not sure, use a ready-made grain-free feed or get professional **horse feed advice uk**.

10 rules of feeding horses when picking grain-free feed

These **10 rules of feeding horses** help keep grain-free diets sensible, safe, and practical:

- Build the diet on **forage** first.
- Select **grain free** feeds that are also **low sugar** and **low starch** when required.
- Tailor feed to the horse's **body condition** and workload.
- Review the **feed label** rather than relying on marketing claims.
- Rely on a **horse feeding chart** as a guide, not a fixed formula.
- Introduce any new feed gradually to support **digestive health**.
- Never assume all grain-free feeds are equal in energy or nutrition.
- Consider whether the ration needs a **balancer** or a **complete horse feed**.

- Keep an eye on **laminitis** risk and overall **hindgut health**.
- Evaluate the diet regularly and modify as work, season, or condition changes.

Using these rules will help you build a practical feeding plan rather than simply selecting a trendy product. Grain-free feeding works best when it is part of a thoughtful, forage-led approach.

FAQ: grain-free horse feed questions answered

What horse feed is grain free?

Grain-free horse feed is any feed made without cereal grains such as oats, barley, wheat, or maize. It usually relies on fibre, oil, and other non-cereal ingredients to supply energy and nutrients. Many grain-free products are also low starch, low sugar, and high fibre.

Is grain-free horse feed always better?

No. It is better for some horses, but not automatically for all. The right feed depends on workload, body condition, digestive health, and individual sensitivity. Some horses do very well on a grain-free diet, while others may need a different approach that still suits their needs.

Can a horse get enough energy without grain?

Absolutely. Horses can get enough energy from forage, fibre, oil, and well-formulated complete horse feed. A grain-free diet can still support a performance horse or poor doer if it is carefully balanced and fed in the right quantity.

What do I need to check on a grain-free feed label?

Focus on ingredient lists that highlight fibre sources, plus analytical values for starch and sugar. Confirm that the feed is a complete horse feed, if it contains vitamins and minerals, and how much should be fed each day. The feeding guide counts as much as the ingredients.

How do I choose the right grain-free horse feed for my horse?

Start with your horse's condition, workload, and any health concerns such as laminitis risk. Use horse feed advice uk sources, assess feed labels, and decide whether you need a balancer, conditioning feed, or complete horse feed. For horse feed for beginners, a forage-first plan is usually the best starting point.