

If you are choosing **horse feed** for a horse with ulcers, the best feed is typically one that protects the stomach, keeps **gastric acid** irritation down, and delivers steady energy without overloading the gut. Horses with **equine gastric ulcers** often do better on an **ulcer-friendly feed** that is based on **forage**, contains plenty of **high fibre feed**, and is low in **starch** and **sugar**.

The right feeding plan is not just about one bag of feed. It is about the whole **forage-first diet**, the timing of meals, the amount of roughage, and how the feed promotes **gut health**. In many cases, the best results come from combining good-quality **hay** or **haylage** with a sensible concentrate, rather than relying on a traditional cereal-based mix.

What renders a horse feed suitable for ulcers?

A well-suited **horse feed** for ulcer-prone horses is one that supports the **stomach lining**, reduces spikes in **acid production**, and fits the horse's **nutritional requirements** without being too rich. The main aim is to keep the digestive system calm and fed for as much of the day as possible.

That is why a **low starch feed** is usually recommended. High levels of starch can pass into the hindgut undigested, which may disturb digestion and lower overall comfort. A **high fibre feed** is often preferable because fibre promotes chewing, saliva production, and a natural **buffering effect** in the stomach.

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For ulcer-prone horses, the best feeds tend to be:

- Rich in fibre and based on roughage
- Low in starch and low in added sugar
- Simple to digest with good **fibre digestibility**
- Suitable for **small frequent meals**
- Effective for maintaining **condition score** without excess cereal

Palatability counts too. A feed that the horse will consume reliably is more useful than a in theory perfect one that is left in the bucket. For ulcer management, consistency, **meal timing**, and a steady daily intake are as important as ingredients.

Which types of horse feed are best avoided?

Certain **types of horse feed** tend to be less suitable for horses with ulcers because they are high in **starch**, heavy in **sugar**, or built around **cereal feed** ingredients. These options can increase the risk of digestive upset and may not support steady, calm energy.

Feeds you should limit or avoid usually include traditional racing-style mixes, high-cereal competition rations, **overweight horse feed** and sweetened feeds with a lot of molasses. They can be calorie-dense, but that calorie density often comes from ingredients that are not ideal for a sensitive stomach.

It is not that every cereal ingredient is automatically bad, but ulcer-prone horses generally do better when the ration is not centred on cereals. If a feed label shows multiple cereal components near the top of the ingredient

list, it may be less suitable than a fibre-based alternative.

Look out for:

- Extremely high starch levels
- Very molassed products
- Large single meals
- Feeds designed mainly for rapid energy
- Products with very little fibre or roughage

For many horses, the safest approach is to decrease reliance on cereal feed and build the ration around forage and fibre sources instead.

Best feed options for horses affected by ulcers

The most suitable feed choices for sensitive horses are usually those which offer easy digestibility, steady energy, and strong fibre support. This is why products such as **complete horse feed**, **high fibre cubes**, **beet pulp**, and **forage-based feed** can be beneficial.

A **complete horse feed** may be suitable for some horses because it can deliver fibre, energy, and added **vitamins and minerals** in one ration. Even so, the feed still needs to be checked carefully for starch and sugar levels. Not all complete feed is automatically ulcer-friendly.

High fibre cubes are often a solid choice because they encourage chewing and can provide **slow-release energy** without the sharp rise associated with cereal-heavy rations. They are usually easy to mix with soaked fibre feeds or balancers.

Beet pulp is another useful option. It is highly palatable, helps increase fibre in the diet, and can be a good way to add calories without relying on starch. When fed correctly, it can fit very well into a digestive support programme.

A **forage-based feed** keeps the ration closer to the horse's natural eating pattern. This may include chopped fibre, alfalfa-based products, soaked fibre, and balancers designed to complement forage rather than replace it.

In practice, many horses with ulcers do well on a combination of:

- Good-quality hay or haylage
- A high-fibre bucket feed
- Beet pulp for more body or energy
- A balancer or complete feed where needed

How to feed a horse with ulcers: important nutrition rules

The most effective **horse feeding rules** for ulcer-affected horses are focused on protecting the stomach from emptiness and avoiding heavy, pressured meals. If you follow the basic **10 rules of feeding horses** with ulcers in mind, you can make a noticeable difference to comfort and digestion.

The main principle is to avoid long gaps without roughage. Horses normally produce **gastric acid** throughout the day, so feeding patterns should work to keep the stomach occupied.

Important rules include:

- Make forage the foundation of the ration
- Use **small frequent meals** instead of large feeds
- Provide **continuous forage** if practical
- Reduce starch and added sugar
- Keep meal times as steady as you can
- Introduce changes slowly
- Make sure plenty of water and salt are available
- Adjust feed to exercise and workload

These rules promote the stomach lining and help reduce the chance of the stomach being empty for too long. They also support hydration, which is important for digestive function and overall comfort.

Work with a horse feeding chart to plan meals

A **horse feeding chart** is useful because it helps you plan **bodyweight**, **forage intake**, and **meal frequency** in one practical plan. It can help you judge whether the horse is getting enough roughage before you add concentrates.

When using a chart, start by estimating bodyweight and then working out daily forage needs. The horse's forage intake should usually be the priority, with bucket feed added only to fill nutritional gaps or provide extra calories. A well-planned chart also makes it easier to spot long fasting periods between meals.

If the horse is on limited turnout or controlled grazing, the chart becomes even more important. It can help you schedule hay nets, soaked fibre feeds, and concentrate meals to keep intake steady across the day.

What amount of horse feed do you give?

No single ideal amount of **horse feed** for every ulcer-prone horse. The proper amount depends on **workload**, **body condition score**, the horse's size, forage quality, and whether the feed is a complete ration or a supplement.

A practical way to think about this is to feed to condition, not just to appetite. If the horse is losing weight, the ration may need more digestible fibre or a higher calorie density. If the horse is carrying too much condition, you may need to reduce the concentrate and improve the forage strategy.

A **horse feed calculator uk** can be a useful starting point, but it should never replace observation. These tools can estimate daily intake, yet they cannot fully assess the horse's temperament, appetite, training demands, or ulcer history. That is why **horse feed advice uk** from an experienced professional can be so valuable.

Consider the following points when setting quantity:

- Present **body condition score**
- Amount and quality of forage
- True **workload**
- Recent weight changes
- How well the horse is tolerating the current ration

If ulcers are suspected or confirmed, avoid sudden feed changes. Raise the feed slowly, monitor **overweight pony feed** droppings and appetite, and review the plan if the horse becomes stressed, sluggish, or difficult to keep in condition.

Should you select a fully balanced horse feed?

A **complete feed for horses** can be a suitable option for horses with ulcers, but only if it forms as part of a careful **balanced ration**. The benefit is that some complete feeds provide roughage, calories, **vitamins and minerals**, and digestive support in one product.

However, not all complete feeds are equal. Some are designed for performance and may contain more starch than an ulcer-prone horse needs. Others are based on roughage and oil and are much more suitable.

Before choosing a complete feed, look at:

- Whether the horse already gets adequate quality forage
- Whether the product is relatively low in starch
- Whether it supplies the right vitamins and minerals
- Whether the horse needs extra calories or only digestive support
- Whether a separate balancer would be better

Forage analysis can help you inform this decision. If you know the nutrient profile of the hay or haylage, you can avoid duplicating nutrients or leaving gaps in the diet. For some horses, a complete feed is a good choice because it complements forage efficiently. For others, a balancer and separate fibre sources are a better fit.

Comparing horse feed brands, costs and products

When comparing **horse feed companies**, brand name matters less than the ingredient profile, feeding rate, and whether the product matches the horse's needs. Many owners consider **spillers horse feed** alongside other brands because they want a recognised name, but the label still needs close reading.

Horse feed cost should also be considered in terms of value, not just bag price. A cheaper bag may require more daily feeding, while a pricier feed might be more concentrated and cost less per day. Most important is the real **price per day** based on the recommended feeding rate.

When comparing products, ask:

- What is the daily requirement?
- Does it rely on fibre as the main base?
- Does it support ulcer-friendly feeding?
- Are you paying for ingredients the horse does not need?
- Does it suit the overall gut health plan?

How to review labels and ingredients

A good way to compare products is by reading the **feed label** carefully. Look at **digestible energy, fibre, and oil** levels first, then check starch and sugar. A good ulcer-prone ration often relies on fibre and oil for calories rather than cereal-based energy.

Digestible energy tells you how calorie-rich the feed is, while fibre helps support gut function and a slower, steadier release of energy. **Oil** is useful because it can increase calorie density without the same starch load as cereals. That makes it helpful for weight maintenance or performance support when used correctly.

Also check the ingredient order. If cereals dominate the list, the feed may be less suitable than a product built around fibre, alfalfa, beet pulp, and oil. For ulcer-prone horses, the best label is often one that is straightforward,

transparent, and clearly designed for digestive support.

Illustrative horse feed mix recipe for stomach-sensitive horses

A simple **horse feed mix recipe** for an ulcer-prone horse should focus on fiber, palatability, and steady energy. One practical way is to combine **unmolassed beet pulp**, **alfalfa**, and **linseed** with a small amount of feed balancer or a low starch fibre feed.

For example, you could build a ration around:

- Soaked unmolassed beet pulp for fibre and moisture
- Cut alfalfa for chewing and buffering support
- Flax for additional oil and condition support
- A suitable balancer to cover micronutrients

This kind of mix can be effective because it provides calorie intake without relying on large cereal content. The beet pulp and alfalfa help create a more forage-like texture, while linseed adds useful oil and may improve palatability.

Be careful not to overfeed any single ingredient. The aim is to create a balanced, digestible ration that fits the horse's daily intake, exercise, and body condition. If you are unsure, check the mix with a nutrition professional before making it the main part of the diet.

Horse feed for beginners: what matters most

For **horse feed for beginners**, the biggest priority is to keep things clear: **forage-first**, regular, and appropriate for the horse's needs. You do not need the most complicated diet to support ulcer-prone horses. You need the right basics done well.

Start with these basics:

- Enough forage throughout the day
- A calm feeding routine with predictable meal timing
- Fresh water at all times
- A fibre-based bucket feed if extra nutrients are needed
- Attention to **gut health** and hydration

Beginners often focus too much on the feed bucket and not enough on roughage. But **roughage** is usually the foundation of ulcer management. A horse that is well supplied with hay or haylage is often much better supported than one eating only two large bucket feeds a day.

Hydration is important too. Sufficient water intake helps with digestion, supports fibre move through the gut, and promotes overall comfort. A forage-first, hydration-aware plan is usually the safest place to begin.

When to ask a vet or nutritionist

It is wise to contact an **equine vet** if ulcer signs are persistent, intense, or getting worse. In many cases, proper diagnosis is important because symptoms can overlap with other issues. An equine vet can assess whether the horse may have **EGUS** and advise on treatment and feeding alongside it.

A **nutritionist** can be especially useful if the horse needs weight gain, performance support, or a more complex ration. They can help you choose between a complete feed, a balancer, fibre feeds, or a custom approach based on forage analysis and the horse's workload.

Common **symptoms** that may justify further support include:

- Little appetite or picky eating
- Dropping weight or difficulty holding condition
- Bad-tempered behaviour around feeding or riding
- Reduced performance
- Soreness when girthing or tacking up
- Changes in droppings or general demeanour

If you suspect ulcers, do not rely on feed changes alone to solve the problem. Feeding is a major part of digestive support, but diagnosis and treatment may still be needed. The most effective plan usually combines veterinary guidance, sensible equine nutrition, and a consistent forage-led routine.

FAQ

What horse feed is best for horses with ulcers?

The best **horse feed** for horses with ulcers is usually a **low starch feed** that is high in fibre, palatable, and designed to support gut health. Look for a **high fibre feed** based on forage, beet pulp, alfalfa, or fibre cubes, and avoid feeds that rely heavily on cereal ingredients.

Should horses with ulcers be fed a complete horse feed?

A **complete horse feed** can be suitable if it is low in starch and fits the horse's **balanced ration**. Some complete feeds provide good digestive support, but others are too cereal-rich. Always compare the feed label and consider the horse's forage and overall nutritional requirements.

How often should I feed a horse with ulcers?

Choose **small frequent meals** if you can and provide **forage at all times** over the day. This can help limit time with an empty stomach and support the stomach lining. The exact feeding pattern depends on turnout, work, and the horse's daily routine, but long gaps without forage should be avoided.

Is alfalfa good for horses with ulcers?

Yes, **alfalfa** is often helpful for horses prone to ulcers because it is fibre-rich and may help create a buffering effect in the stomach. It is often included in a forage-first feeding plan, especially when combined with beet pulp or other digestible fibre sources.

What horse feeds should be avoided if a horse has ulcers?

Generally avoid feed options that are high in **starch levels**, high in **added sugar**, or built mainly around **cereal feed**. They are less likely to suit horses with ulcers. Instead, choose a feed that supports digestion, steady energy, and consistent intake across the day.