

Picking the right **horse feed** in hot weather is more than adding energy and mainly about supporting **hydration**, **digestive health**, and a steady supply of usable nutrients. With more **grazing**, higher temperatures, and often a change in **workload**, **summer horse feeding** needs a balanced approach. The best results usually come from a **forage first** plan, careful use of **hard feed**, and close attention to **body condition score**.

Summer diets should help a horse stay cool, maintain **bodyweight**, and keep **gut health** stable. That means looking at what the horse eats, how much exercise it does, how much **pasture** it has, and whether the diet is balanced for **nutrient requirements**. In many cases, the best answer is less feed overall, but the right type of feed in the right amount.

What shifts in a horse's diet in summer?

Summer alters a horse's diet in several important ways. The largest difference is usually access to **grazing** and fresh **pasture**, which can increase the amount of roughage, water, and sugar in the diet. That influences **hydration**, energy intake, and digestive function. A horse on regular **pasture turnout** may need less bucket feed than it does in winter, but it still needs a balanced diet.

Hot weather also adds to the risk of **heat stress**. Horses may sweat heavily, drink less than expected, or lose **electrolytes**. This makes hydration balance a major part of summer horse feeding. A horse may need more access to clean water, salt, and electrolytes, especially if it is in work. If appetite drops in the heat, highly palatable feed can help maintain intake without overloading the digestive system.

Another change is the quality of forage. Summer grass can be rich in **sugar**, which may suit some horses but not others. Horses prone to weight gain, laminitis, or metabolic issues may need tighter control of grazing and a diet that stays **low sugar** and **low starch**. On the other hand, hard-working horses may need enough digestible energy to support performance without excessive starch.

The main goal is to adjust feeding to the season, not to feed the same ration all year. Summer feeding should be guided by condition, workload, and the amount of roughage already coming from the field or paddock.

Which types of horse feed work best in hot weather?

The ideal **types of horse feed** for hot weather are usually those that support digestion, encourage regular intake, and prevent sharp energy surges. That often means a ration built around **forage** with a well-selected bucket feed if needed. The right feeds depend on the horse's work, condition, and forage access.

Forage stays the foundation of the diet. High-quality **forage** or **wrapped forage** can be used if grazing is not enough or if grass is sparse. For horses that maintain condition easily, forage may be enough on its own. For horses needing extra support, the next step is often a **complete horse feed** or a **feed balancer**, depending on how much extra calories is needed.

A **complete horse feed** can be beneficial because it is designed to deliver fibre, vitamins, and minerals in one option. Numerous products are formulated to be **low starch** and **low sugar**, making them ideal for summer when digestive comfort is important. This can be a convenient option for horses that need a straightforward diet and steady nutrient intake.

For the horses that just need vitamins, minerals, and amino acids to complement grazing and forage, a balancer may be a better choice than a full hard feed ration. That helps avoid unnecessary calories while still meeting

nutrient requirements. Horses in harder work may need a feed with more digestible fibre and some starch, but the aim should still be to keep the diet as consistent and settled as possible.

When comparing feed options, look for:

- Rich in digestible fibre content
- Moderate or low starch levels
- Managed sugar content
- Solid vitamin and mineral coverage
- Easy-to-follow guidance on feeding rate by bodyweight and workload

During summer, the ideal horse feed is typically one that provides energy without excess heat-producing starch. That does not mean starch must always be avoided, but it should be managed carefully and tailored to exercise levels.

Should you cut hard feed in summer?

In most situations, yes. **Hard feed** often may need cutting back in summer because pasture and grazing can contribute more of the diet already. If a horse is on ample grass, the amount of bucket feed may be more than it needs. Lowering **feed quantity** can help prevent too much weight gain and limit digestive strain.

That said, the correct answer depends on **workload**. A horse in light work may need little or no hard feed, while a competition horse, a poor doer, or a horse with a demanding schedule may still need more fuel. The principle is to feed according to output, not season alone. Summer simply alters what the horse is already getting from forage and pasture.

If reducing hard feed, do it gradually. Sudden changes can affect the hindgut and disturb appetite. Keep an eye on energy levels, coat condition, and body condition score. If the horse begins to drop weight, becomes dull, or struggles to recover after exercise, the ration may need tweaking.

Some horses do better when the hard feed is swapped with more forage-based calories rather than a dense cereal mix. This supports digestive health and can lower the risk of sharp energy peaks. For many owners, the best summer strategy is to reduce bucket feed where possible, but keep the ration nutritionally balanced and appropriate for the horse's actual workload.

How horse feeding rules change in summer

Horse feeding rules remain in place in summer; they only become more important. The classic **10 rules of feeding horses** still apply, but summer conditions make some of them especially relevant. The most important **horse feeding advice** is to prioritise forage, water, consistency, and careful observation.

- Feed **forage first** and build the diet around roughage.
- Provide clean water at all times to support hydration.
- Select feed that matches workload and body condition.
- Make ration changes gradually.
- Set feeding times as consistent as possible.
- Avoid overfeeding energy to horses that are already getting rich pasture.
- Balance minerals and vitamins even when bucket feed is reduced.
- Provide electrolytes if the horse sweats heavily.

- Monitor bodyweight and body condition score regularly.
- Watch for signs of digestive upset, heat stress, or reduced appetite.

These rules matter because summer can conceal problems. A horse may look well on the surface, yet still have a poor hydration balance or be getting too much sugar from grass. Feeding choices should support stable **gut health** and even energy release.

A sensible summer plan is to review the whole diet, not just the bucket. Grazing, forage, hard feed, supplements, and exercise all interact. Good horse feeding rules are about matching the ration to the horse's real needs.

How to use a horse feeding chart

A **horse feeding chart** is helpful because it lets owners weigh up feed amounts against bodyweight, work level, and condition. It is not a fixed answer for every horse, but it gives a place to begin for building a **daily ration**. A chart also helps you see when a horse is getting not enough forage or excessive hard feed.

One of the most practical measures is **body condition score**. This tells you whether the horse is underweight, ideal, or carrying too much cover. In summer, a horse may maintain condition on pasture alone, while another loses weight because of work or heat. A feeding chart helps you react in a planned way instead of guessing.

To apply a chart well:

- Estimate the horse's **bodyweight** accurately.
- Check body condition score rather than relying on appearance alone.
- Look at how much forage and pasture the horse already has.
- Match bucket feed to the horse's workload.
- Adjust the daily ration slowly if condition changes.

A chart is most useful when combined with real-world observation. If the horse is losing topline, appearing flat, or not recovering well after exercise, the chart may need updating. If weight is creeping up, reduce *low starch fibre feed* energy intake and review grazing access. The chart is a tool, not a replacement for judgment.

How much horse feed should a horse get in summer?

No single answer exists to how much **horse feed** a horse should get in summer, because the right amount varies with bodyweight, workload, forage intake, and pasture quality. A **horse feed calculator uk** can be useful as a starting point, but it should always be tailored to the horse in front of you. Summer diets often need reduced hard feed and more emphasis on roughage.

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The key question is not just the amount of bucket feed to give, but how much total forage the horse is eating. **Forage intake** from pasture, hay, and haylage may already cover a large part of the horse's energy needs. If the horse is on abundant pasture, additional feed may need to be minimal. If the horse has restricted grazing, then forage and bucket feed both matter more.

A helpful **horse feeding chart** often is built on roughage as the foundation and then supplements rations or ration balancer according to exercise level. Horses in low work may only need a balancer and forage. Horses in

intermediate to intense work may need a more robust feed, but still not so much starch that it causes digestive problems.

As a general guideline, make sure the ration supports condition, not just calories. If a horse is holding a healthy body condition score, shows good energy, and is eating well, the amount is probably close to right. If you are not sure, use a calculator as a guide, then evaluate the diet weekly.

What should beginners know about summer horse feeding?

For **horse feed for beginners**, the most practical advice is to keep the diet stable, forage-based, and straightforward to observe. Summer can make feeding seem more manageable because horses may get more grass, but it can also make it more difficult to judge what the horse really needs. Good **horse feed advice uk** often starts with routine and careful watching rather than complex feeds.

A strong **feeding routine** matters. Feed at the same times each day where possible, provide constant access to water, and keep forage available so the horse does not have long gaps without fibre. Beginners should learn to assess body condition and watch for changes in appetite, droppings, hydration, and behaviour.

It is also important to know that not every horse needs a big hard feed. Some horses do best with hay, grazing, and a balancer. Others need more support because of work, age, or poor condition. Beginners should avoid copying another horse's ration without checking whether the workload and pasture access are really the same.

If you are new to summer feeding, start by asking three questions: how much grazing does the horse have, how much work is it doing, and is the horse maintaining bodyweight? Those answers usually point to the best type and amount of feed.

Which horse feed brands and companies are commonly chosen?

There are many **horse feed companies** on the market, and owners often choose products based on forage support, condition management, or performance needs. Some brands are commonly recognised, including **spillers horse feed**, which is often considered by owners looking for a broad range of feed types and balancers.

Brand choice should begin with the **feed labels**. Labels tell you the source of energy, starch and sugar levels, fibre content, and whether the product is a full **complete horse feed** or a complementary feed. This is especially important in summer, when a feed that looks suitable at first glance may be too rich for a horse already getting plenty of pasture.

When evaluating brands, compare:

- Digestible fibre
- Starch and sugar levels count
- Whether the feed is complete or needs forage alongside it
- Match for light, moderate, or hard work
- Coverage of minerals and vitamins overall

Different horse feed companies may sell similar products, but the details matter. A good label helps you choose the feed to the horse's body condition score, workload, and forage access. In summer, the best brand is the one that fits the ration, not necessarily the one with the biggest name.

How much does horse feed cost in summer?

Horse feed cost depends depending on feed type, quality, and how much the horse needs. If you are asking **how much does horse feed cost** in summer, the answer depends on whether the horse is mainly on forage and grazing or needs a full bucket feed. In many cases, summer can cut feed bills if pasture provides a large share of the diet.

A sensible **budget** should include not just bucket feed, but also hay, haylage, balancers, electrolytes, and supplements where needed. Horses that sweat heavily may need extra support for hydration and electrolytes, and that should be counted as part of the total feeding cost. A horse on limited grazing may still need significant forage, so summer does not always mean lower costs.

To manage cost well:

- Use forage efficiently and avoid waste
- Feed only what the horse needs for its workload
- Choose a balancer if full hard feed is unnecessary
- Check whether the horse is overfed on rich pasture
- Compare the cost per day, not just the bag price

The lowest-cost option is not always the best if it fails to support digestive health or condition. The best budget decision is usually the one that keeps the horse healthy, avoids waste, and matches the summer ration to actual need.

Can you make a horse feed mix recipe at home?

Yes, you can make a **horse feed mix recipe** at home, but it must be done carefully to maintain **ration balance**. A home mix can be useful for owners who want to control ingredients, but it is easy to get the balance wrong if the diet lacks vitamins, minerals, or amino acids. That is why a **balancer** is often the safest way to support a home-made ration.

If making a blend, keep the base simple and forage-focused. The goal should be a low-risk gentle diet rather than a complicated recipe. Many horses do well with rehydrated or pelleted fibre sources, a nutritional balancer, and a small amount of condition feed if needed. This can help support energy without raising starch too high.

Main points for a home mix:

- Keep starch low unless the horse truly needs more
- Use ingredients that provide digestible fibre
- Include a balancer for nutrient coverage
- Check the feed against the horse's workload and bodyweight
- Review body condition score often

Home mixing can succeed, but the diet must still cover nutrient requirements. If you are unsure, use a proven commercial feed or ask for help fine-tuning the ration. A recipe is only useful if it maintains health consistently over time.

When should you ask for horse feed advice?

You should ask for **horse feed advice uk** whenever the horse's state, performance, or digestion changes and the cause is not obvious. A **vet** should be involved if there are signs of illness, weight loss, poor appetite, loose

droppings, colic risk, or suspected metabolic problems. A qualified **nutritionist** is helpful when you need a ration designed around bodyweight, workload, grazing access, and condition goals.

It is especially important if:

- The horse is dropping or gaining weight quickly
- There are signs of heat stress or poor hydration balance
- Grazing changes suddenly
- You are unsure whether the horse needs more forage, less hard feed, or a different type of feed
- The horse has special needs such as laminitis risk, poor teeth, or competition demands

Good horse feed advice is practical and specific. It should help you select the right feed quantity, support digestive health, and make feeding easier to manage. If you are ever unsure, professional input is worth it, especially during summer when pasture and heat can alter the ration quickly.

Frequently asked questions about nutrition for horses in summer

Which is the best horse feed for summer?

The most suitable **horse feed** for summer is usually based on forage and suited to the horse's activity level and body state. For plenty of horses, that means high-quality hay, haylage, or grazing, plus a reduced starch balancer or a **complete horse feed** if extra nutrients are needed. The best option is the one that supports hydration, digestive health, and steady energy without overloading the horse on sugar or starch.

Do horses need less hard feed in hot weather?

Often yes, because summer grazing and pasture can already provide extra energy and fibre. Reducing **hard feed** may help reduce the risk of weight gain and support gut comfort. However, the final amount depends on **workload**, body condition, and how much forage the horse is already eating. Some horses still need a substantial bucket feed, especially if they are in regular work.

What amount of forage should a horse have in summer?

Forage should continue to be the foundation of the diet, whether it comes from grass, hay, or haylage. The exact amount depends on bodyweight, pasture quality, and the rest of the ration, but summer feeding should always protect **forage intake**. If grazing is limited or the horse is losing condition, add hay or haylage to keep fibre intake consistent.

Is a complete horse feed appropriate for summer feeding?

Yes, a **complete horse feed** can be suitable in summer, especially if it is designed to be reduced starch and low sugar. It is often useful when you [overweight horse feed](#) want a easy ration that provides fibre, vitamins, and minerals in one product. It can work well alongside forage and grazing, provided the amount is adjusted to the horse's workload and body condition.

What is the best way to know if my horse needs a feed calculator or feeding chart?

If you are unsure how much to feed, a **horse feed calculator uk** or **horse feeding chart** is a helpful place to start. These tools help you estimate a suitable daily ration based on bodyweight, workload, and condition. They

are especially useful if the horse is gaining or dropping weight, getting more or less grazing, or changing work level. Use them as guides, then check the horse's body condition score and adjust gradually.