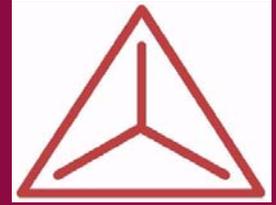




BRAND NEWS

Extension Horse Program Newsletter

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Lead Line by Jason Turner

Tips to Stretch Your Hay Supply

If you have bought hay recently or are preparing to do so, be ready for "sticker shock." With drought conditions in several areas of the US and numerous fires taking out grazing lands, the price of hay is near record highs. I had hoped to share with you some alternatives to feeding horses hay. However, a recent price check on these alternatives (by-product feeds) has shown that the prices of by-products that are suitable to feed to horses have recently reached prices that are nearly that of alfalfa. Therefore, the best approach for horse owners to deal with these high prices is to make sure you are using your forage supply as efficiently as possible. The following tips are geared toward the mature horse under maintenance or light riding conditions.

Tip #1: Weigh feed and feed to maintain the horse in a moderate (5 or 6) body condition score (BCS). Typically a mature horse (1100 lb.) will eat about 2% (22 lb.) of their body weight per day. If we are feeding alfalfa hay, this will more than meet their energy and protein requirements. In fact, we could feed that horse 18 lb. of alfalfa per day and still meet their energy and protein requirements. Assuming that alfalfa hay costs \$275/ton, feeding 4 lb. less per day would save about \$200/horse/year. You can use a hanging scale to weigh the hay, and use a weigh tape to estimate your horse's weight. If your horse is a little over the moderate BCS, a little weight loss might be beneficial to its health. If it is under the moderate BCS (ribs visible), then you should feed at a level that will help it maintain the 5 to 6 BCS. If you have horses on pasture, consider limiting their time on pasture each day to stretch your grazing. You could dry lot them ½ the day and graze them ½ the day.

Tip #2: Feed quality hay. Although it is expensive, it is the foundation of a good and safe feeding program. Don't try to save money by buying poor quality hay. Generally, it costs you more in the long run as you have to feed more of it, or have to feed

grain, in order to maintain body condition. Furthermore, poor quality hay may contain toxic plants, mold, etc. that lead to greater expense on vet bills. Consider partnering with neighbors to make bulk purchases that may help get a lower price on hay.

Tip #3: If by-product feeds such as beet pulp or pelleted soybean hulls are available at a reasonable cost, you might consider replacing a portion (no more than 50%) of the horses daily hay ration with these feeds. Remember that any change in diet should be made slowly over a 10-14 day period.

As forage becomes scarce, make sure to check pastures and turn out areas for poisonous plants. Horses generally avoid these plants, but if no alternative is available they may begin to consume them which can have fatal consequences. If you have questions on evaluating your feeding program, please contact your county agent or myself for further advice.

Horse Happenings and New Mexico

June

25, The Horse Emporium at Cherry Tree Farm, Albuquerque. For more information:

<http://www.nmhorsecouncil.org/Horse%20Emporium%202011.pdf>

25, District 4-H Horse Show, Ft. Sumner. For more information: lemarez@nmsu.edu

July

11-14, State 4-H Horse Contests, Las Cruces.

22-23, State 4-H Horse Show, Tucumcari. For more information: quay@nmsu.edu

23-30, US Arabian Youth National Show, Albuquerque. For more information:

www.arabianhorses.org/competitions/nationalevents/youthnationals/2011

30-31, Singleton Ranches Stock Horse Event, Lamy. For more information contact Grant Mitchell at singletonhorses@mac.com or visit:

<http://www.americanstockhorse.org/calendar/>

31, Zia Festival Races, Ruidoso Downs. For more information: <http://www.ruidownsracing.com/>

Noteworthy Newsbites

The archived webcast of the speakers at the **NM Equine Industry Summit** held in Clovis on March 26, 2011 are finally online at: horses.nmsu.edu. The summary of participant evaluations and the workshop exercises are also available as pdf files. If you were unable to attend the Summit, please go check out the valuable information presented regarding the equine industry in New Mexico.

Industry takes “first step” towards **drug-free racing**:
www.bloodhorse.com/horse-racing/articles/63576/medication-summit-called-new-beginning#ixzz1PRS88Ap0

Arizona Wildfire Displaces Horses:
www.thehorse.com/ViewArticle.aspx?ID=18375

Given that **wildfires** are in the area, this link to the AAEP might provide some good basics for horse owners on how to **best prepare for** an emergency evacuation with their horses:
www.aaep.org/health_articles_view.php?id=251

For those interested in the equine slaughter issue:

Nebraska Legislature Passes Processing Study Bill
www.thehorse.com/Print.aspx?ID=18206

American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act of 2011 (SB 1176; <http://thomas.loc.gov>)

Bill Would Ban Horse Transport to Foreign Processing Plants
www.thehorse.com/ViewArticle.aspx?ID=18377

Pistol Pete's Posse

The week after final exams in May, 11 students went on the **NMSU Equine Industry Study Tour** where they visited several racing and ranch horse operations across the state. If you would like to know more about the tour, check out the news story at: <http://newscenter.nmsu.edu/news/article/7806/>

During the week of June 12-18, NMSU sent 12 rodeo athletes to the **College National Finals Rodeo** in Casper, WY. Team members competing include:

Staci Stanbrough, Kendra Stineman, Olivia Train, Dixie Richards, Shian Irwin, Cooper DeWitt, Anthony Buckman, Johnny Salvo, Bo Simpson, Cole Rogers, Ethan Shelley and Rodee Walraven. **Results** are available at: www.collegerodeo.com

The **NMSU Ranch Horse Team** finished out their competition season with a **3rd place team** finish at the Collegiate Championship in Abilene, TX on April 16.

Turner's Tip

If you are looking at substituting one feedstuff for another in your horse's diet, these simple conversions for energy may be helpful.

The energy (calories) in 1 lb. Alfalfa hay = 1.07 lb. of Bermudagrass hay = 0.69 lb. oat grain = 0.60 lb. corn grain = 3.86 oz. vegetable oil

In order to make the most efficient use of that expensive hay you're feeding, keep a white or trace mineral salt block and plenty of fresh water available to your horse(s). Since the horse's body is about 2/3 water, it is the key nutrient to insure that other nutrients are metabolized efficiently.

Well Worth Watching

Webinar: Equine Herpesvirus-1 (EHV-1): What Horse Owners Should Know, Available at: www.thehorse.com

Ask the Vet Live Q&A: Unwanted Horses, June 22.
(www.thehorse.com/ViewArticle.aspx?ID=18363)

Webinar: Infectious Upper Respiratory Tract Disease in Horses, June 30. www.thehorse.com

Webcast: Advances in Equine Genetics by Dr. Molly McCue, July 20. www.myhorseuniversity.com

Closing Comments

While the anxiety over the recent EHV-1 outbreak seems to have calmed, this is a good reminder for all of us to “sharpen” our skills and animal husbandry practices related to biosecurity and sanitation. You can find more information on management practices to promote the health of your horse and sanitation of facilities at: www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/content/printable_version/HorseBioSecurity_final.pdf