

Excitable Equines

by

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Horses that are stressed, excitable or nervous can be difficult to handle and potentially even dangerous. But what causes a horse to be 'fizzy' or 'hot' and are calmativ products really the answer for excitable equines?

Various factors can contribute to excitability in horses. Diets high in sugar and starch (NSC) - found in some pastures, processed feeds and cereal grains - have been linked with excitability in horses. Overfeeding and under working is one of the main causes of hot behaviour.

Housing conditions and level of exercise also affect temperament and behaviour of horses. When confined to stables, yards and paddocks, exercise and mental stimulation can be limited resulting in horses become bored, sometimes causing excitable and even aggressive behaviour. Exposure to stressful situations and inappropriate training techniques can further exacerbate the problem.

Numerous supplements claiming to have calmativ actions are commercially available. They frequently contain Tryptophan (an amino acid). However, little published, peer-reviewed scientific data has explored the efficacy and safety of tryptophan specifically in horses. Rather the claims to calmativ efficacy are applied from research conducted in non-equine species. Some studies with horses given tryptophan have actually reported increased excitability and reduced endurance capacity – which are obviously undesirable outcomes for both horse and rider.

Better dietary design is a practical way of managing equine excitability. Feed to the exercise level of the horse, and don't overfeed. Due to the association between high grain (high NSC) diets and hot behaviour, feeding low grain diets is one of the secrets to success. If the diet simply contains too much energy, it should be modified so that horses' energy needs are met but not exceeded. Be really honest with yourself about this, and only feed for the level of work the horse is actually doing, and not for the workload you aspire to. Remember the treats...they also contain high levels of energy! Feeding alternates low NSC, high energy feeds, which provide energy from oil and fiber - such as CoolStance - may help prevent excitability.

Better husbandry can also help to minimise excitable behaviour. Horses should be provided with ample paddock time, low-stress training methods and be thoroughly acclimatised to potentially stressful situations wherever possible. Common sense

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dictates that the causes underlying excitable behaviour should be addressed before the aid of purportedly calmative products is sought. Diet manipulation by replacing grain with oil and fibre rich feeds, improved husbandry and better management provide practical options for preventing excessive equine excitability.

Cool Stance Quick Facts

- 1. What is Cool Stance?** CoolStance is the meat from the inside of a coconut after much of the oils has been removed. The oil extraction process is chemical free and the coconuts come from trees that are not genetically modified.
- 2. How does CoolStance supply energy?** CoolStance contains readily digestible sources of energy from fibre, fat and protein
- 3. Does CoolStance Contain Starch?** There is less than 2% starch and less than 12% NSC in CoolStance.
- 4. How is CoolStance different to other oilseed meals?** The fat in CoolStance is predominantly in the form of saturated medium chain fatty acids. Medium chain fatty acids are easier to digest absorb and utilise for energy than the longer chain fatty acids found in other oilseeds such as sunflowers.
- 5. Will CoolStance go rancid?** Because the fat in CoolStance is saturated it will stay fresh for long periods of time.
- 6. Which type of horse can be fed CoolStance?** CoolStance is suitable for all types of horses.
- 7. Is CoolStance a complete feed?** CoolStance is not a complete feed, and although it does contain a micro-mineral concentration that is 4 to 5 times higher than in cereal grains it may still be necessary to use a suitable vitamin and mineral supplement when you are feeding breeding, growing or working horses.
- 8. Do horse like CoolStance?** CoolStance has a unique aroma that most horses like. Because it is unusual, some horses may take a little while to adjust to their new feed, but if you persist, we are sure you will find the effort is worth it.

*For more information about CoolStance
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