

Coconut Oil in Horse Feed

Studies have shown that saturated fatty acids give the following effects in horses:

- Increased muscle glycogen content,
- Increased sparing of muscle glycogen during light work
- Increased utilization of muscle glycogen during heavy work.

Unsaturated oils such as rice bran, corn, soybean, flax do not give these effects. Saturated oils are derived from animal fats, or coconut oil. Animal fats are unacceptable in horse feeds.



Coconut oil is a palatable source of saturated fatty acids, and is contained in the products **CoolStance** and **PowerStance**.

The unique nutritional benefits of coconut oil form the basis of the **Stance Equine Feeding System**.

The key benefits of coconut oil include:

- It is stable and resistant to rancidity. Because of its saturated structure, coconut oil can be stored for long periods of time without risk of rancidity. Rancid oils reduce the palatability of a feed, interfere with the utilization of fat soluble vitamins and may cause damage to muscle and organ tissue if consumed.
- Coconut oil contains medium chain triglycerides (MCT) that are easier to digest, absorb and utilize in comparison to the long-chain fatty acids found in other oils such as maize, soy, canola and rice-bran oil. MCT absorbed directly into the portal blood and transported to the liver. By comparison, long chain fatty acids are absorbed into the lymphatics and slowly transported to the liver. Further, MCT appear to behave more like glucose than other oils, meaning coconut oil provides a ready source of energy for use during exercise.
- Some of the MCT (lauric, capric and caproic acids) in coconut oil possess antibacterial and antiviral properties. These fatty acids may assist the horse's immune system in fighting off viral and bacterial challenges, leading to improved overall gut health and wellbeing. MCT have been shown to control Salmonella in chickens, and it is suggested that MCT may be of benefit in horses with Dysbiosis.
- Coconut oil may have performance benefits. A study by Pagan *et al* (1993) found that horses supplemented with coconut oil versus soybean oil had lower blood lactate and ammonia and higher free fatty acids than a control group of horses who were not supplemented with fat during the gallop and the warm down phase of a standardized exercise test. These effects may have a positive influence on performance. In addition, a study by Matsumoto (1995) found that mice supplemented with medium chain fatty acids took longer to reach a state of exhaustion whilst swimming than un-supplemented mice.

For more information or to order CoolStance, please call 803-647-1200 or e-mail Claudia@stanceglobal.com