

Performance Ponies – Feeding to prevent founder

(The BIG Question) Getting weight on thin ponies without causing laminitis – looks at NSC!!

- Ponies developed under tougher conditions than horses, and require less feeding – but nutrition is still important
- Size does make a difference - Ponies are often much smaller than horses – feeding guides are based on average weight of 500kg horse – make sure you measure your pony to obtain an accurate weight range for feeding. “ponies tend to be more metabolically efficient than large horses, but still require the nutrition necessary for growth, gestation, lactation, breeding and competition.” [Purina]
- Feeding ponies concentrates – feed less and feed low NSC
- Body condition & topline – (where is the weight going – why is the horse skinny? E.g. worms, sore back, lack of exercise)
- Get your feeding measurements sorted – what does one scoop or one cup equal (don't guess)
- Feed little & often 2-3 (more if possible) small feeds per day – look at NSC %
- Work out the activity level of your pony (you don't want to be feeding more energy than your pony needs) – even if you aren't riding your pony take it for a walk to ensure that it is getting some exercise.



- Feeding hay for fiber & digestive function. Check the NSC level of your hay to prevent insulin resistance. Idea: soak your ponies' hay, to reduce the sugar & starch content, before feeding.
- Treats and tit bits – if you give your pony treats don't give them as much food (it is easy to overdo the when ponies are so small & can be prone to metabolic disorders)
- Ponies have Attitude – Careful nutrition with low sugar and starch helps with that attitude



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