

“Nine Reasons NOT to Feed Alfalfa”

- 1. Diminished performance.** Alfalfa runs 18-20% protein, horses only need 10-12%. The higher alfalfa content causes higher body temperatures as the organs work to convert protein to useable energy thus performance diminishes. May also lead to excess sweating, electrolyte loss, dehydration, impaction, colic.
- 2. Hyperthyroidism, thumps & bad attitude.** Excess calcium interferes with parathyroid function leading to “thumps”, muscle cramps and tying up.
- 3. Tying Up.** Feeding too much protein decreases T4 thyroid levels that metabolize glucose properly. Higher glucose levels in muscles at work delay the buildup of lactic acid. Excess lactic acid inhibits the muscles ability to contract and relax properly and stay in a contracted (tied up) state. Also, excess calcium in alfalfa suppresses the magnesium levels necessary for muscles to relax properly.
- 4. Kidney Problems & Scratches.** Body produces ammonia to get rid of excess of non-protein nitrogen (nitrates) which are toxic to horses and can lead to respiratory problems.
- 5. Increased Incidence of Disease.** High protein/low fiber diets predispose stressed horses to some illnesses i.e.: Potomac fever, strangles, salmonella, ulcers, abortions, ephphysitis.
- 6. Enteroliths.** Intestinal “Stones” formed from ammonium magnesium phosphated from excess protein. Low fiber keeps the gut from functioning properly allowing stones to form.
- 7. Developmental Bone Problems/Disease.** Too much calcium interferes with absorption of copper and zinc and actually leads to a calcium deficiency as the body automatically kicks it out before it can be used to build bones. Because much of it is unusable it may be deposited as splints, spavins, etc. Contracted tendons in foals may actually be contracted muscles in the forearm and gaskin. Tendons and ligaments don't shorten, muscles are tied up due to excess calcium.

8. **Colic.** Richness prevents it being fed continually without a weight problem. Natural grazing allows for continued digestive function and fiber in the gut continuously.
9. **Arthritis.** By-product of protein digestion is acid. Equines and humans need to be on the alkaline side. Minerals are mostly alkaline and thus the body pulls minerals from bone tissues to buffer acid levels for the other organs, primarily the heart. As bones and tissues demineralize ligaments become weak. The body will attempt to stabilize the weakness with calcium deposits. *

These are serious problems. Why ask for them by feeding alfalfa? Bar none, no other single thing complicates and compromises your horse's health, performance, attitude and long-term comfort more. The abundance of acid, protein and calcium literally wreak havoc in the equine body, disrupting optimal mineral balances in an effort to compensate, leaving your horse with the tragic aftermath to cope with. Grass hay is the closest thing to a "natural" grazing, carbohydrate, roughage based diet.

Keep in mind, *"You can trace every sickness, every disease and every ailment to a mineral deficiency."* Linus Pauling, MD, winner of two Nobel Prizes.

Chelated minerals will neutralize the acid metabolites produced by the digestive processes and ready them for elimination along with other toxins thus maintain ph balance and stimulate normal hormone function increasing growth, fertility and athletic function. Bone health is preserved, a sound gut is enjoyed and productive long-term comfort and health is promoted. In today's world of depleted soils and food sources chelated mineral supplementation is required for balanced health.

We encourage all horse owners to evaluate their equine feeding program with these considerations in mind.

* "Nine Reasons not to Feed Alfalfa", Dynamite Specialty products.