

## Hay - Nutritional Value or Quality. What's the difference?

Traditionally, good quality hay has a bright green colour, no dust or mould and a sweet smell – which is probably due to high sugar content! You can choose between hard seed hay or soft meadow hay and these can be organic or non-organic. After that, buying hay is like working in the dark and hoping for the best.

Worse still, hay produced from grass seed mixes marketed as suitable for horses may still contain ryegrass, which many horse owners actively avoid due to concerns about high sugar content.

All in all, you know nothing about the nutritional value of the feedstuff that makes up the largest part of your horse's diet.

On the other hand, if you know the nutritional value of the hay you are feeding, you will know:

- How much energy your hay is contributing to your horse's diet. Important for weight management and behavioural issues.
- If you need to feed additional protein
- If this hay is suitable for horses at risk from laminitis due to overweight, EMS, IR, PPID or for horses with sole sensitivity issues.

Soaking hay is not the solution if points 1 and 3 are your concern. Unless your hay has been analysed you do not know how much sugar is there to start with, how much has been removed by soaking (and this can vary greatly) and how much sugar is left in the hay after soaking. So, you still do not know if the hay you are feeding is suitable and once again, you are working in the dark and hoping for the best.

Plus soaking will probably deplete the hay of other desirable minerals.

No one enjoys soaking hay. It is inconvenient, cold in winter and smelly in summer. Wet hay nets are heavy to lift and who wants a bad back?

Much simpler and more effective is to buy hay of the right nutritional value in the first place. If, like Feet First Hay, it is below 10% combined sugar and starch then it is considered safe to feed to horses at risk from laminitis due to overweight, EMS, IR, PPID or to horses with sole sensitivity issues.

A consistent supply of low sugar and starch hay should help stabilise blood glucose and avoid the insulin spikes which have been shown to trigger laminitis.

Weight management is much easier as you will soon know how much hay to feed per day to maintain a healthy weight. A simple set of scales is all you need to regulate intake according to workload, grass availability and ambient temperature.

Feet First Hay is the ideal source of forage for all horses and ponies in light to medium work. It is made from traditional pasture grasses shown over time to be highly palatable and well suited to meet their needs. Every batch has been fully analysed for nutritional value and mineral content. Feet

First Hay takes the stress and uncertainty out of buying hay because it is always tested and below 10% combined sugar and starch.

**Simple\* Reliable\* Flexible**



Hilary Snow

Feetfirst Hay, 30 August 2016

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