

If you are choosing **horse feed** for a horse with ulcers, the best feed is generally one that supports the stomach, keeps **gastric acid** irritation minimal, and offers steady energy without overloading the gut. Horses with **equine gastric ulcers** often do better on an **ulcer-friendly feed** that is centered on **forage**, contains plenty of **high fibre feed**, and is low in **starch** and **sugar**.

The right feeding plan is not just about one bag of feed. It is about the whole **forage-first diet**, the timing of meals, the amount of roughage, and how the feed promotes **gut health**. In many cases, the best results come from combining good-quality **hay** or **haylage** with a sensible concentrate, rather than relying on a traditional cereal-based mix.

What renders a horse feed appropriate for ulcers?

A well-suited **horse feed** for ulcer-affected horses is one that protects the **stomach lining**, helps reduce spikes in **acid production**, and matches the horse's **nutritional requirements** without being too rich. The main aim is to keep the digestive system stable and nourished for as much of the day as possible.

That is why a **low starch feed** is usually preferred. High levels of starch can pass into the hindgut undigested, which may upset digestion and lower overall comfort. A **high fibre feed** is often preferable because fibre promotes chewing, saliva production, and a natural **buffering effect** in the stomach.

For ulcer-prone horses, the best feeds tend to be:

- High in fibre and built on roughage
- Very low in starch and low in added sugar
- Readily to digest with good **fibre digestibility**
- Well-suited for **small frequent meals**
- Helpful for maintaining **condition score** without excess cereal

Palatability matters too. A feed that the horse will eat consistently is more useful than a technically ideal one that is left in the bucket. For ulcer management, consistency, **meal timing**, and a steady daily intake are just as important as ingredients.

Which types of horse feed should be avoided best?

Many **types of horse feed** tend to be less suitable for horses with ulcers because they are high in **starch**, rich in **sugar**, or built around **cereal feed** ingredients. These options can increase the risk of digestive upset and may not support even, settled energy.

Feeds you should limit or avoid usually include traditional racing-style mixes, high-cereal competition rations, and sweetened feeds with a lot of molasses. They can be calorie-dense, but that calorie density often comes from ingredients that are not ideal for a sensitive stomach.

It is not that every cereal ingredient is automatically bad, but ulcer-prone horses generally do better when the ration is not centred on cereals. If a feed label shows multiple cereal components near the top of the ingredient list, it may be less suitable than a fibre-based alternative.

Watch out for:

- High starch levels

- Heavy molassed products
- Oversized single meals
- Feeds designed mainly for quick energy
- Products with little fibre or roughage

For many horses, the safest approach is to reduce dependence on cereal feed and build the ration around forage and fibre sources instead.

Ideal feed choices for horses affected by ulcers

The best feed choices for sensitive horses are usually those which combine easy digestibility, steady energy, and plenty of fibre support. This is why products such as **complete horse feed**, **high fibre cubes**, **beet pulp**, and **forage-based feed** can be helpful.

A **complete horse feed** may suit some horses because it can deliver fibre, energy, and added **vitamins and minerals** in one ration. However, the feed still needs to be checked carefully for starch and sugar levels. Not every complete feed is automatically ulcer-friendly.

High fibre cubes are often a solid choice because they encourage chewing and can provide **slow-release energy** without the sharp rise associated with cereal-heavy rations. They are usually easy to mix with soaked fibre feeds or balancers.

Beet pulp is another practical option. It is highly palatable, helps increase fibre in the diet, and can be a good way to add calories without relying on starch. When fed correctly, it can fit very well into a digestive support programme.

A **forage-based feed** keeps the ration more in line with the horse's natural eating pattern. This may include chopped fibre, alfalfa-based products, soaked fibre, and balancers designed to complement forage rather than replace it.

In practice, many horses with ulcers do well on a combination of:

- Good-quality hay or haylage
- A fibre-based bucket feed
- Beet pulp for extra condition or energy
- A balancer or complete feed where needed

Feeding a horse with a horse with ulcers: essential feeding guidelines

The ideal **horse feeding rules** for ulcer-sensitive horses are focused on guarding the stomach from emptiness and avoiding heavy, pressured meals. If you follow the basic **10 rules of feeding horses** with ulcers in mind, you can make a noticeable difference to comfort and digestion.

The key principle is to avoid long gaps without roughage. Horses naturally produce **gastric acid** throughout the day, so feeding patterns should help keep the stomach occupied.

Key rules include:

- Make forage the foundation of the ration
- Use **small frequent meals** rather than large feeds
- Provide **continuous forage** where possible

- Reduce starch and added sugar
- Keep meal times as steady as you can
- Make changes gradually
- Provide plenty of water and salt are available
- Match feed to exercise and workload

These rules support the stomach lining and help reduce the chance of the stomach being empty for too long. They also support hydration, which is important for digestive function and overall comfort.

Rely on a horse feeding chart to plan meals

A **horse feeding chart** is valuable because it helps you organise **bodyweight**, **forage intake**, and **meal frequency** in one practical plan. It can help you check whether the horse is getting enough roughage before you add concentrates.

When using a chart, start by estimating bodyweight and then working out daily forage needs. The horse's forage intake should usually be the priority, with bucket feed added only to fill nutritional gaps or provide extra calories. A well-planned chart also makes it easier to spot long fasting periods between meals.

If the horse is on limited turnout or controlled grazing, the chart becomes even more important. It can help you schedule hay nets, soaked fibre feeds, and concentrate meals to keep intake steady across the day.

How much horse feed should you give?

There is no single right amount of **horse feed** for every ulcer-prone horse. What is right depends on **workload**, **body condition score**, the horse's size, forage quality, and whether the feed is a complete ration or a supplement.

A useful way to approach this is to feed to condition, not just to appetite. If the horse is losing weight, the ration may need more digestible fibre or a higher calorie density. If the horse is carrying too much condition, you may need to reduce the concentrate and improve the forage strategy.

A **horse feed calculator uk** can be a useful starting point, but it should never replace observation. These tools can estimate daily intake, yet they cannot fully assess the horse's temperament, appetite, training demands, or ulcer history. That is why **horse feed advice uk** from an experienced professional can be so valuable.

Use the following checks when deciding quantity:

- Current **body condition score**
- Level and quality of forage
- Real **workload**
- Recent past weight changes
- How well the horse is coping with the current ration

If ulcers are thought to be present, avoid sudden feed changes. Build the ration up gradually, monitor droppings and appetite, and review the plan if the horse becomes stressed, sluggish, or difficult to keep in condition.

Should you select a complete horse feed?

A **complete feed for horses** can be a good option for horses with ulcers, but only if it is used as part of a careful **balanced ration**. The advantage is that some complete feeds provide fibre, calories, **vitamins and minerals**, and digestive support in one product.

However, not all complete feeds are equal. Some are made for performance and may contain more starch than an ulcer-prone horse needs. Others are based on forage and oil and are far more suitable.

Before choosing a complete feed, consider:

- Whether the horse already gets enough quality forage
- Whether the product is reduced in starch
- Whether it delivers the right vitamins and minerals
- Whether the horse needs extra calories or only digestive support
- Whether a separate balancer would be better

Forage analysis can help you inform this decision. If you know the nutrient profile of the hay or haylage, you can avoid duplicating nutrients or leaving gaps in the diet. For some horses, a complete feed works well because it complements forage efficiently. For others, a balancer and separate fibre sources are a better fit.

Horse feed brand, pricing and product comparisons

When comparing **horse feed companies**, the brand matters less than the ingredient profile, feeding rate, and whether the product matches the horse's needs. Many owners consider **spillers horse feed** alongside other brands because they want a recognised name, but the label still needs close reading.

Horse feed cost should also be considered in terms of value, not just bag price. A cheaper bag may require more daily feeding, while a pricier feed might be more concentrated and cost less per day. Most important is the real **price per day** based on the recommended feeding rate.

When reviewing feeds, **low starch competition feed** ask:

- How much does the horse need each day?
- Is the feed a true fibre-based option?
- Will it suit a stomach-friendly feeding plan?
- Are you paying for unnecessary ingredients?
- Will it work within the broader digestive plan?

Comparing feed labels and ingredients

The best way to compare products is by reading the **feed label** carefully. Check **digestible energy, fibre**, and **oil** levels first, then check starch and sugar. A good ulcer-prone ration often relies on fibre and oil for calories rather than cereal-based energy.

Digestible energy indicates how calorie-rich the feed is, while fibre helps support gut function and a slower, steadier release of energy. **Oil** is useful because it can increase calorie density without the same starch load as cereals. That makes it helpful for weight maintenance or performance support when used correctly.

You should also check the ingredient order. If cereals dominate the list, the feed may be less suitable than a product built around fibre, alfalfa, beet pulp, and oil. For ulcer-prone horses, the best label is often one that is simple, transparent, and clearly designed for digestive support.

Illustrative horse feed mix blend for ulcer-affected horses

A straightforward **horse feed mix recipe** for an ulcer-prone horse should prioritize fibre, taste, and gentle energy. One useful approach is to combine **unmolassed beet pulp**, **alfalfa**, and **linseed** with a small amount of supplement or a low starch fibre feed.

For example, you could create a ration around:

- Dampened unmolassed beet pulp for fibre and moisture
- Shredded alfalfa for chewing and buffering support
- Flaxseed for additional oil and condition support
- A suitable balancer to cover micronutrients

This kind of mix can be effective because it provides calorie intake without relying on high cereal content. The beet pulp and alfalfa help create a more forage-like texture, while linseed adds useful oil and may improve palatability.

Be careful not to overfeed any single ingredient. The aim is to create a steady, digestible ration that fits the horse's daily intake, exercise, and body condition. If you are unsure, discuss the mix with a nutrition professional before making it the main part of the diet.

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Horse feed for beginners: what matters most

For **horse feed for beginners**, the biggest priority is to keep things clear: **forage-first**, steady, and appropriate for the horse's needs. You do not need the most complicated diet to support ulcer-prone horses. You need the right basics done well.

Start with these essentials:

- Lots of forage throughout the day
- A calm feeding routine with predictable meal timing
- Fresh water at all times
- A fibre-based bucket feed if extra nutrients are needed
- Attention to **gut health** and hydration

Beginners often focus too much on the feed bucket and not enough on roughage. But **roughage** is usually the cornerstone of ulcer management. A horse that is well supplied with hay or haylage is often much better supported than one eating only two large bucket feeds a day.

Hydration is important too. Sufficient water intake aids digestion, allows fibre move through the gut, and adds to overall comfort. A forage-first, hydration-aware plan is usually the safest place to begin.

When to ask a vet or nutritionist

It is wise to contact an **equine vet** if ulcer signs are persistent, severe, or getting worse. In many cases, proper diagnosis is important because symptoms can overlap with other issues. An equine vet can assess whether the

horse may have **EGUS** and advise on treatment and feeding alongside it.

A **nutritionist** can be especially useful if the horse needs weight gain, performance support, or a more complex ration. They can help you choose between a complete feed, a balancer, fibre feeds, or a custom approach based on forage analysis and the horse's workload.

Common **symptoms** that may justify further support include:

- Poor appetite or picky eating
- Dropping weight or difficulty holding condition
- Irritable behaviour around feeding or riding
- Reduced performance
- Soreness when girthing or tacking up
- Changes in droppings or general demeanour

If you suspect ulcers, do not rely on feed changes alone to solve the problem. Feeding is a major part of digestive support, but diagnosis and treatment may still be needed. The most effective plan usually combines veterinary guidance, sensible equine nutrition, and a consistent forage-led routine.

FAQ

What horse feed is best for horses with ulcers?

The best **horse feed** for horses with ulcers is usually a **low starch feed** that is high in fibre, palatable, and designed to support gut health. Look for a **high fibre feed** based on forage, beet pulp, alfalfa, or fibre cubes, and avoid feeds that rely heavily on cereal ingredients.

Should horses with ulcers be fed a complete horse feed?

A **complete horse feed** can be suitable if it is low in starch and fits the horse's **balanced ration**. Some complete feeds provide good digestive support, but others are too cereal-rich. Always compare the feed label and consider the horse's forage and overall nutritional requirements.

What is the best feeding frequency for a horse with ulcers?

Provide **little and often meals** where possible and offer **continuous forage** throughout the day. This can help limit time with an empty stomach and support the stomach lining. The exact feeding pattern depends on turnout, work, and the horse's daily routine, but long gaps without forage should be avoided.

Is alfalfa good for horses with ulcers?

Yes — **lucerne** is often helpful for horses prone to ulcers because it is fibre-rich and can support a useful buffering effect in the stomach. It is often included in a forage-first feeding plan, especially when combined with beet pulp or other digestible fibre sources.

Which horse feeds should be avoided if a horse has ulcers?

Generally avoid feed options that are high in **starch**, rich in **sugars**, or made mostly from **cereal feed**. These options are less likely to suit horses with ulcers. Instead, pick a feed that supports digestion, steady energy, and consistent intake across the day.