

If you are choosing **horse feed** for a horse with ulcers, the best feed is generally one that soothes the stomach, keeps **gastric acid** irritation low, 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 supports **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-prone horses is one that supports 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 settled and nourished for as much of the day as possible.

That is why a **low starch feed** is usually recommended. High levels of starch can travel into the hindgut undigested, which may disrupt digestion and diminish overall comfort. A **high fibre feed** is often better because fibre promotes chewing, saliva production, and a natural **buffering effect** in the stomach.

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

- High in fibre and made from roughage
- 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 is important too. A feed that the horse will consume reliably is more useful than a theoretically perfect one that is left in the bucket. For ulcer management, consistency, **meal timing**, and a steady daily intake are equally important as ingredients.

What kinds of horse feed should be avoided best?

Certain **types of horse feed** may be less suitable for horses with ulcers because they are high in **starch**, heavy in **sugar**, or built around **cereal feed** ingredients. These options can increase the risk of digestive upset and may not support steady, calm energy.

Feeds to 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.

Be alert for:

- Extremely high starch levels

- Heavy molassed products
- Large single meals
- Feeds designed mainly for fast energy
- Products with minimal fibre or roughage

For many horses, the safest approach is to cut back on cereal feed and base the ration on forage and fibre sources instead.

Ideal feed options for horses with ulcers

The most suitable feeding options for horses with ulcers are usually those which offer easy digestibility, slow-release energy, and good fibre support. That is where products such as **complete horse feed**, **high fibre cubes**, **beet pulp**, and **forage-based feed** can be useful.

A **complete horse feed** may be suitable for some horses because it can deliver fibre, energy, and added **vitamins and minerals** in one ration. Even so, the feed still needs to be checked carefully for starch and sugar levels. Every complete feed is automatically ulcer-friendly.

High fibre cubes are often a good 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 a further helpful 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 aligned 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 everyday feeding, many horses with ulcers do well on a combination of:

- High-quality hay or haylage
- A fibre-based bucket feed
- Beet pulp for more body or energy
- A balancer or complete feed where needed

Feeding a horse with a horse with ulcers: important nutrition rules

The ideal **horse feeding rules** for ulcer-sensitive horses are built around protecting the stomach from emptiness and avoiding large, stressful meals. If you follow the basic **10 rules of feeding horses** with ulcers in mind, you can make a meaningful difference to comfort and digestion.

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

Key rules include:

- Base the ration on forage first
- Use **small frequent meals** in place of large feeds
- Provide **continuous forage** where possible
- Reduce starch and added sugar

- Keep meal times as regular as possible
- Introduce changes slowly
- Make sure plenty of water and salt are available
- Adjust feed to exercise and workload

These rules help protect 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.

Use a horse feeding chart to plan meals

A **horse feeding chart** is useful because it helps you map out **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 of a quantity of 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 practical way to think about 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.

Consider the following points when setting quantity:

- Current **body condition score**
- Quantity and quality of forage
- Real **workload**
- Recent weight changes
- How well the horse is tolerating the current ration

If ulcers are suspected, 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 fully balanced horse feed?

A **complete horse feed** can be a suitable option for horses with ulcers, but only if it forms as part of a well-planned **balanced ration**. The benefit is that some complete feeds supply roughage, calories, **vitamins and minerals**, and digestive support in one product.

However, not all complete feeds are equal. Some are designed 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 relatively low in starch
- Whether it provides 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 make 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 is a good choice because it complements forage efficiently. For others, a balancer and separate fibre sources are a better fit.

Comparing horse feed brands, costs and products

When evaluating **horse feed companies**, brand name 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. What matters most is the real **price per day** based on the recommended feeding rate.

When reviewing feeds, ask:

- How much does the horse need each day?
- Is it genuinely fibre-based?
- Does it support ulcer-friendly feeding?
- Are you paying for unnecessary ingredients?
- Does it suit the overall gut health plan?

How to review labels and ingredients

A good way to compare products is by reading the **feed label** carefully. Look at **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 shows you 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.

Example horse feed mix formula for ulcer-affected horses

A basic **horse feed mix recipe** for an ulcer-prone horse should focus on roughage, taste, and gentle energy. One useful method 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 build a ration around:

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

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

Be cautious 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.

Horse feed for beginners: what matters most

For **horse feed for beginners**, the biggest priority is to keep things basic: **forage-first**, consistent, 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.

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Start with these basics:

- Plenty 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 base 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 matters too. Adequate water intake helps with digestion, helps 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, intense, 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:

- Reduced appetite or picky eating
- Weight loss 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.

How often should I feed a horse with ulcers?

Use **small, frequent meals** where possible and ensure **forage at all times** all day long. This helps reduce time with an empty stomach and supports the stomach lining. The right feeding pattern depends on turnout, work, and the horse's daily routine, though long gaps without forage should be avoided.

Can alfalfa help horses with ulcers?

Yes — **alfalfa** is often a useful ingredient for [high fibre horse feed](#) ulcer-prone horses because it is high in fibre and may help buffer stomach acid. It is commonly used as part of a forage-first feeding plan, especially when paired with beet pulp or other digestible fibre sources.

What feeds should be avoided for a horse with ulcers?

Usually avoid feed options with high **starch levels**, containing lots of **sugar**, or built mainly around **cereal rations**. They are less likely to suit horses with ulcers. Instead, select a feed that supports digestion, steady energy, and regular intake throughout the day.