

When you're wondering what horse feed is grain free, the quick answer is any horse feed made without cereal grains such as oats, barley, maize, or wheat. These feeds are usually designed to be **lower in starch**, **lower in sugar**, and **higher in fibre**, with a clearer focus on **forage based** nutrition. That is why they are a popular choice for horses that need a calmer, more controlled diet, especially where **gut health** or **laminitis concern** is a concern.

A grain-free diet does not mean "no energy" or "all hay and nothing else". A good grain-free **horse feed** can still be **properly balanced** and suitable for leisure horses, **performance diets**, and horses that need careful **calorie control** management. The key is learning about the different **horse feed types**, reading the **feed label** properly, and choosing the right **day-to-day ration** for your horse's **body condition** and workload.

What exactly is grain-free horse feed mean?

Grain-free horse feed is nutrition that does not include traditional cereal grains as the main part. Instead of using starch from oats or barley, it uses ingredients such as chopped fibre, grass nuts, alfalfa, beet pulp, oil, and added **vitamins and minerals**. In many cases, this makes the feed more suitable for horses that do best on a **high fibre** diet.

Among the many **types of horse feed**, grain-free options sit alongside mixes, cubes, pellets, chaffs, balancers, and full ration feeds. Some are **complete horse feed**, meaning they are designed to supply the full nutritional package when fed as directed. Others are straights or supplements that must be paired with **forage** such as **hay** or **haylage**.

A grain-free diet is often selected because the horse's **digestive system** is better suited to fibrous feeds than to large amounts of starch. That can support **hindgut health**, steadier [low starch laminitis feed](#) behaviour, and improved **digestibility**. However, grain-free does not automatically mean suitable for every horse, and it does not replace the need for careful feeding management.

Which horse feeds are generally grain free?

Many **horse feed companies** now sell grain-free options, from plain fibre blends to fully supplemented products. Brands such as **spillers horse feed** include a range of feeds aimed at different needs, including low starch, low sugar, and fibre-first formulas. The same is true across other producers that focus on performance, leisure, and condition-building products.

Popular grain-free **types of horse feed** include:

- **Complete horse feed** designed to replace or reduce the need for additional hard feed
- **Conditioning feed** for horses needing weight gain or improved topline
- Low starch balancers and ration builders
- Fibre cubes and pellets made from beet pulp, alfalfa, or grass
- Oil-rich feeds that increase energy without adding grain

Plenty of these feeds are marketed as ideal for horses that need a calmer diet, better **digestive health**, or help maintaining a steady **body condition**. Some are specifically aimed at horses with metabolic sensitivity, while others are intended for active horses that need extra fuel without a heavy cereal load.

When comparing products, do not rely on the front of the bag alone. A feed may be grain free, but still contain plenty of **sugar** or enough **starch** to matter for a sensitive horse. Always check the analytical constituents and ingredient list before deciding.

Is grain-free feed suitable for every horse?

Not necessarily. Good **horse feeding rules** start with the idea that the horse is an individual. A grain-free plan can be ideal for one horse and unfitting for another. That is why **horse feed for beginners** advice usually begins with the basics: know the horse's weight, workload, temperament, forage access, and health history before selecting a feed.

Under standard **horse feed advice uk**, the first question is usually whether the horse really needs hard feed at all. Many horses do well on **forage** alone, especially if they are easy keepers. Others need a grain-free hard feed to provide extra nutrients, support condition, or help with training and work.

Grain-free feed may be a good idea if your horse:

- Is a **good doer** and adds weight easily
- Has had **laminitis** or is deemed at risk
- Needs a **low starch** diet for behavioural or digestive reasons
- Needs extra fibre rather than cereal energy
- Struggles with large amounts of traditional hard feed

It may be less suitable if the horse needs very high energy intake and cannot hold weight despite generous forage and an appropriate **complete horse feed**. In these cases, you may need a more concentrated solution, perhaps still grain free, but carefully chosen for energy density and nutrient profile.

How to check labels for grain-free ingredients

Reading labels is one of the most important skills in choosing grain-free **horse feed**. A feed can say "grain free" but still include ingredients that contribute substantial **sugar** or **starch**. First with the ingredient panel, then move to the nutritional analysis, and finally compare that information with the feeding directions.

Watch for:

- A direct claim that the feed is grain free
- Reduced **starch** and **sugar** levels
- A fibre-forward ingredient list
- Added **vitamins and minerals**
- Guidance for the total **daily ration**

Good ingredients often include alfalfa, beet pulp, grass, linseed, soya hulls, vegetable oil, and other fibrous sources. These help provide to a more **forage based** formula. If the feed is a **complete horse feed**, it should state that it can meet requirements when fed at the recommended amount. If not, it may need to be paired with a **balancer** or additional supplementation.

A **horse feeding chart** can help you compare the feed against your horse's size and workload, but it should be used alongside the label rather than instead of it. For horses with special needs, especially those prone to **laminitis**, a diet review is more important than marketing terms.

Do grain-free diets also supply sufficient energy?

Yes, grain-free diets may provide enough energy for many horses. What matters most is knowing the difference between energy from starch and energy from fibre and oil. A grain-free feed often uses fibre fermentation and fat as the main **energy source**, which can support steady performance and better **digestive system** function.

For owners using a **horse feed calculator uk**, the goal is usually to match the feed to the horse's weight, workload, and condition without overfeeding calories. This helps prevent unnecessary weight gain while still supporting exercise, recovery, and overall health. The calculator can be a helpful starting point, but it cannot replace practical assessment of **body condition** and behaviour.

Grain-free diets may also affect **horse feed cost**. Some fibre-rich and specialised feeds are more expensive per bag than basic mixes, but the true cost depends on how much is fed, how concentrated the product is, and whether it replaces other components in the ration. A more expensive bag may last longer if the feed is highly concentrated and fed in smaller amounts.

A well-formulated **complete horse feed** can still supply enough energy for work, provided it is fed according to the manufacturer's **feeding guide**. For horses with higher demands, energy may be increased through additional forage, oil, and a carefully selected conditioning product rather than cereal grains.

Grain free feeding choices by horse type

Various horses need different varied feeding approaches, and that is where helpful **horse feed advice uk** comes in handy. An easy **horse feeding chart** can guide owners align feed type to workload, but it should always be adjusted for temperament, condition, and health history. For **horse feed for beginners**, the most sensible approach is to start with forage, then formulate the ration only if needed.

For good doers and overweight horses

Easy keepers usually do well on controlled rations and plenty of low-calorie **forage**. For these horses, horse feeding rules often focus on keeping **calorie intake** down while maintaining chewing time and digestive comfort. A grain-free option can work very well here because it often supports a **high fibre**, low **starch** approach.

Rely on the **horse feed calculator uk** as a guide, then monitor bodyweight regularly and adjust. Avoid overfeeding conditioning products, even if they are grain free, because some still supply concentrated energy. For many good doers, a balancer with measured forage and a small amount of fibre feed is enough.

For hard keepers and working horses

Poor doers and horses in heavier work may need a more generous ration. In these cases, a **complete horse feed** can be a sensible option because it provides a nutrient-dense base without having to build a complicated mix from scratch. Some owners also use a home-made **horse feed mix recipe** to combine fibre, oil, and additional digestible calories.

For a **performance horse**, grain-free feeding can still support training if the ration is well planned. The most important factors are digestibility, fibre quality, and enough energy to maintain condition and recovery. A sensible mix may include a high-quality fibre feed, oil, and a balancer to cover **vitamins and minerals**.

How much does grain-free horse feed cost?

Horse feed cost can vary widely depending on format, level of concentration, and brand. When people ask **how much does horse feed cost**, the truth is that it depends on the feed's density and how much your horse actually needs per day. Grain-free products often cost more per bag than basic cereal mixes, but they may be fed in smaller quantities.

Several factors influence cost:

- Whether the product is a **complete horse feed** or a supplement
- The standard of fibre and fat sources
- Added nutrients and targeted wellbeing support
- Brand positioning from **horse feed companies**
- How much is needed in the **daily ration**

It can be helpful to weigh the cost per day rather than bag cost. A more nutrient-rich feed may seem expensive, but if it takes the place of several other items in the diet, the overall **horse feed cost** may be reasonable. Be sure to calculate feeding by the recommended amount, not by the headline on the label.

Is it possible to make a grain-free horse feed mix at home?

Absolutely, but it should be done carefully. A home **horse feed mix recipe** can be helpful for horse owners who want a say over ingredients, but it is common to create an unbalanced ration if you do not account for **vitamins and minerals**, calories, and protein. Many **types of horse feed** are suitable for DIY formulating, especially if the horse has health issues or specific dietary requirements.

Numerous owners blend chopped fiber, beet pulp, linseed, oil, and a balancer. However, this is only advisable if the full ration remains **nutritionally balanced**. If you build your own mix, benchmark it with reputable feeds from **horse feed companies** and ensure you are not missing key nutrients.

The biggest risk with home-mixed diets is believing grain free automatically means healthy or complete. Without thorough balancing, a feed can be too low in protein, too heavy in **sugar**, or short in crucial trace minerals. If you are unsure, choose a ready-made grain-free feed or seek professional **horse feed advice uk**.

10 guidelines for feeding horses when choosing grain-free feed

The following **10 rules of feeding horses** help make grain-free diets practical, safe, and effective:

- Build the diet on **forage** first.
- Select **grain free** feeds that are also **low sugar** and **low starch** where needed.
- Tailor feed to the horse's **body condition** and exercise level.
- Review the **feed label** rather than relying on marketing terms.
- Consult a **horse feeding chart** as a guide, not a fixed plan.
- Offer any new feed gradually to support **digestive health**.
- Do not assume all grain-free feeds are equal in energy or nutrients.
- Consider whether the ration needs a **balancer** or a **complete horse feed**.
- Watch for **laminitis** risk and overall **hindgut health**.
- Evaluate the diet regularly and modify as work, season, or condition changes.

Using these rules will help you develop a practical feeding plan rather than simply buying a trendy product. Grain-free feeding works best when it is part of a thoughtful, forage-led approach.

FAQ: grain-free horse feed questions answered

Bifid UK

+44 800 422 0888

sales@bifid.co.uk

<https://bifid.com/uk/>

What horse feed is grain free?

Grain-free horse feed is any feed formulated without cereal grains such as oats, barley, wheat, or maize. It usually relies on fibre, oil, and other non-cereal ingredients to deliver energy and nutrients. Many grain-free products are also low starch, low sugar, and high fibre.

Is grain-free horse feed always better?

No. It is better for some horses, but not automatically for all. The right feed depends on workload, body condition, digestive health, and individual sensitivity. Some horses do very well on a grain-free diet, while others may need a different approach that still fits their needs.

Can a horse get enough energy without grain?

Certainly. Horses can get enough energy from forage, fibre, oil, and well-formulated complete horse feed. A grain-free diet can still support a performance horse or poor doer if it is carefully balanced and fed in the right quantity.

What should I focus on on a grain-free feed label?

Look for ingredient lists that prioritise fibre sources, plus analytical values for starch and sugar. Confirm that the feed is a complete horse feed, if it contains vitamins and minerals, and how much should be fed each day. The feeding guide counts as much as the ingredients.

How can I pick the right grain-free horse feed for my horse?

First consider your horse's condition, workload, and any health concerns such as laminitis risk. Use horse feed advice uk sources, review feed labels, and decide whether you need a balancer, conditioning feed, or complete horse feed. For horse feed for beginners, a forage-first plan is usually the best starting point.