

Food Preparation and Storage for Horses

Getting your horse's food ready and storing it the right way is super important—it helps prevent waste and keeps your horse healthy. Let's dive into how to do it!

Keeping Food Fresh

Both hard feed and forage need a clean, dry spot to stay fresh. It's crucial to keep all food bowls and equipment spick-and-span, free from any old, stale food. Trust me, you don't want to feed your horse anything that's gone bad—it can lead to some serious digestive issues. So, let's look at some handy tips to keep everything clean and avoid



waste.

Storing Forage

When it comes to hay and straw, make sure you stack them when they're cool and dry, ideally under cover to protect them from the elements. To help air circulate and keep things from getting damp and musty, place the bales on pallets or wooden planks, lifting them a few inches off the ground.

For haylage, handle the bales carefully to avoid punctures. And remember, if any bales are damaged or look a bit dirty, it's best not to feed them to your horse.

Storing Hard Feed

Now, let's talk about hard feed. Keep it in a cool, dry place inside a vermin-proof container with a secure lid. Make it a habit to wash out those feed bins between fresh bags of food, and don't forget to clean bowls and scoops regularly, too.

It's also important to store your feed where your horse can't reach it. And watch out for unsoaked sugar beet—this can be dangerous if a horse gets into it!

Tip: Check the ‘use by’ date on the feed packet. If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to reach out to the feed manufacturer for storage tips.



Feeding Your Horse

Before you serve up any dry food, give it a little dampening with water to help reduce the risk of choke. Use a large, shallow bowl that sits on the floor—it makes it tougher for your horse to tip it over. Rubber or plastic bowls are great options since they won’t hurt your horse if they accidentally bump into them.

Mangers that attach to stable doors or fences are another option, but letting your horse eat from the ground is more natural for them.



Feeding Forage

While it's more natural for horses to munch on hay from the floor, it can end up getting trampled and wasted. Consider using a hay net to help measure out your horse's rations and slow down their eating if you choose a small mesh net. Just make sure to tie it high enough with a quick-release knot to prevent any accidents!

When you're feeding hay in the field, try scattering it in small piles. This way, your horse can move around and graze as they would naturally. If there are multiple horses in the field, ensure there are more piles than horses to avoid any squabbles over food.



Tip: Weighing your horse's feed—including forage—can be a game changer for weight management. This is particularly helpful if your horse needs to shed a few pounds, as it allows you to keep track of how much they're eating. A good rule of thumb is that horses should eat at least 1.5% of their body weight each day.