

# FEEDING YOUR OFF THE TRACK

BY DR. NERIDA MCGILCRIST



# INTRODUCTION

Racehorses are specifically bred to race. And their entire life has been focussed on racing.

That is, until now.

Because now they are your OTT racehorse.

And you want them to transition from being a racehorse to a new career with you.

Because OTTs are so incredibly smart, versatile and beautiful, that career could be anything from being your best friend and trail riding companion, right through to being seriously competitive in any number of disciplines.

Regardless of your future plans with your OTT, what and how you feed will have a significant impact on your OTTs success; first, in transitioning to their new career. And then remaining a healthy, happy, calm companion who is physically and mentally able to do the work you are asking of them.

The question is, with aallll the many ways you could feed and all the different opinions on what is best... how do you know what, and how to feed, to achieve the best possible outcome for you and your OTT?

Well, hopefully I can help you with that!

I'm Dr Nerida and in this short e-Book, that has been written to accompany the Queensland Off-The-Track nutrition video series, I am going to walk to you through simple, but effective feeding strategies to keep you safe while we bring out the best in your OTT.

As a PhD nutritionist I have a passion for gut health, an insatiable desire to learn and many a mile under my belt working with feed and supplement companies as well as breeding farms, racing and performance stables and all manner of other equines around the world.

Combining what I have learnt through my research, with the knowledge I have accumulated as an on the ground equine nutritionist for the last 20 plus years, I will walk you through feeding your gorgeous OTT!

First, we will get to know your horse 'inside out' as we discover their gut, what all the different sections do and the most important feeding rules to protect their gut health.

Then we will focus on feeding in the first 12 months off the track. You will learn that taking the time to re-establish gut health in the first 6 months then helps you to easily put weight on your OTT in the second 6 months.

Finally, we will cover feeding into the future, looking at the 4 most important feeding rules you should follow to keep your OTT healthy, happy and performing at their best.

Use this e-Book as a little reminder for what you learn in the videos. And use the diets presented here as a starting point for building customised diets for your OTT.

Have fun, stay safe, and enjoy your OTT journey!



Nerida

xx

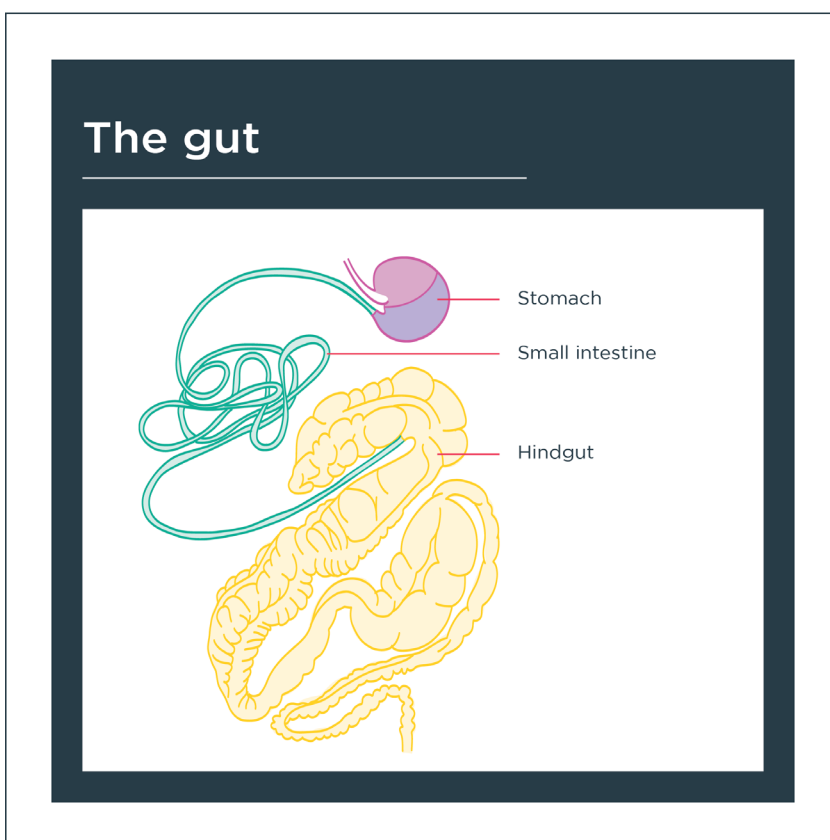
## 1

# KNOW YOUR HORSE INSIDE OUT

Remember the key to knowing how to feed your OTT to keep them at their healthiest and happiest is understanding their gut.

## THE GUT

A horse is a 'monogastric hindgut fermenter' with a single stomach, small intestine and giant hindgut.



# THE STOMACH

The stomach's main jobs are to:

1. Hold feed and release it slowly into the small intestine; and
2. Start the process of protein and some mineral digestion.

## Always Remember

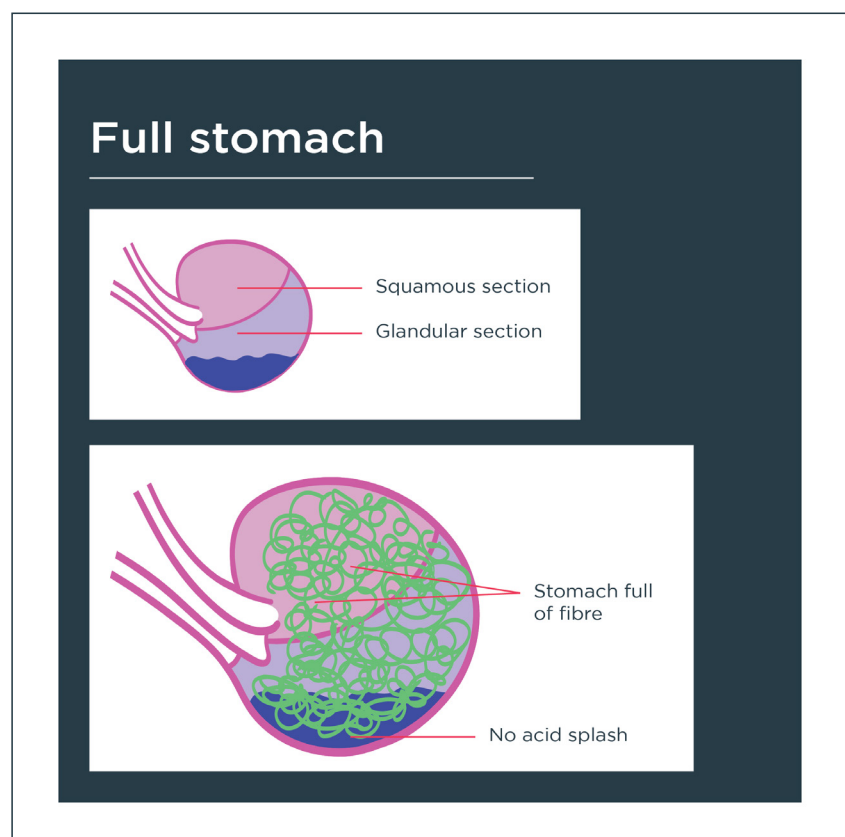
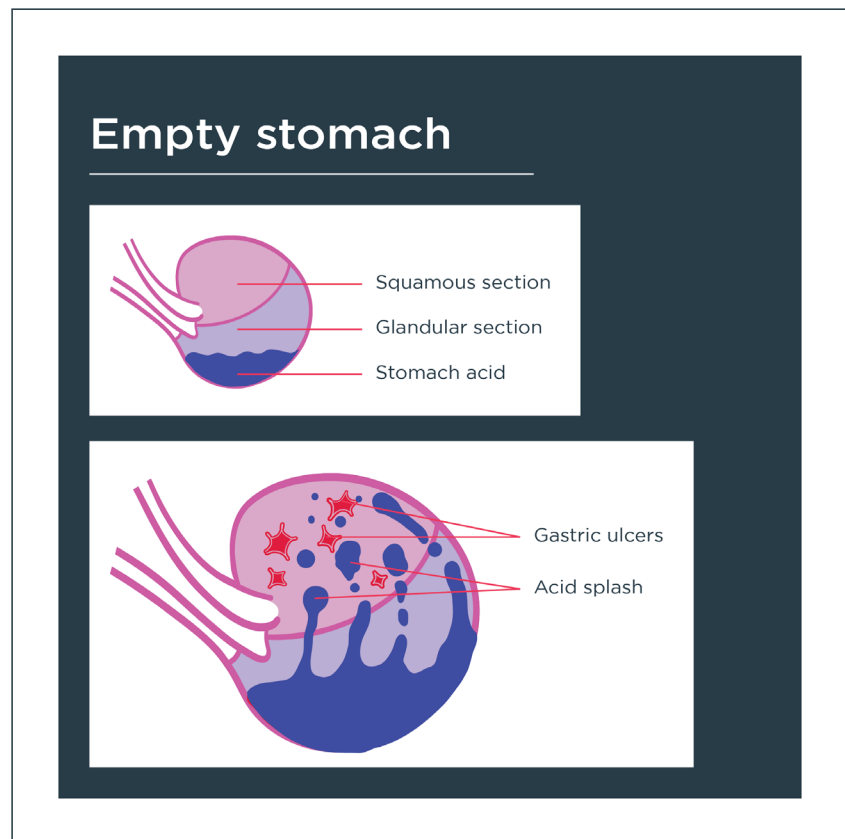
1. Your OTT is secreting gastric acid into their stomach 24/7; and
2. The top section of the stomach has no built-in protection from that acid. If you let acid 'splash' up to the top of the stomach, your horse will get ulcers.

## Happy Healthy Stomach

You need to keep your horse's stomach FULL of fibre (pasture and hay). This stops acid splash and makes sure there is lots of acid-soothing saliva in there too.

## The Rules

1. Feed LOTS of forage. If you don't have pasture, feed your OTT hay, hay and more hay.
2. Don't leave your OTT for more than 4 hours without hay or pasture.
3. Feed hay before you ride. Lucerne hay is best.



# THE SMALL INTESTINE

The small intestine's main jobs are to:

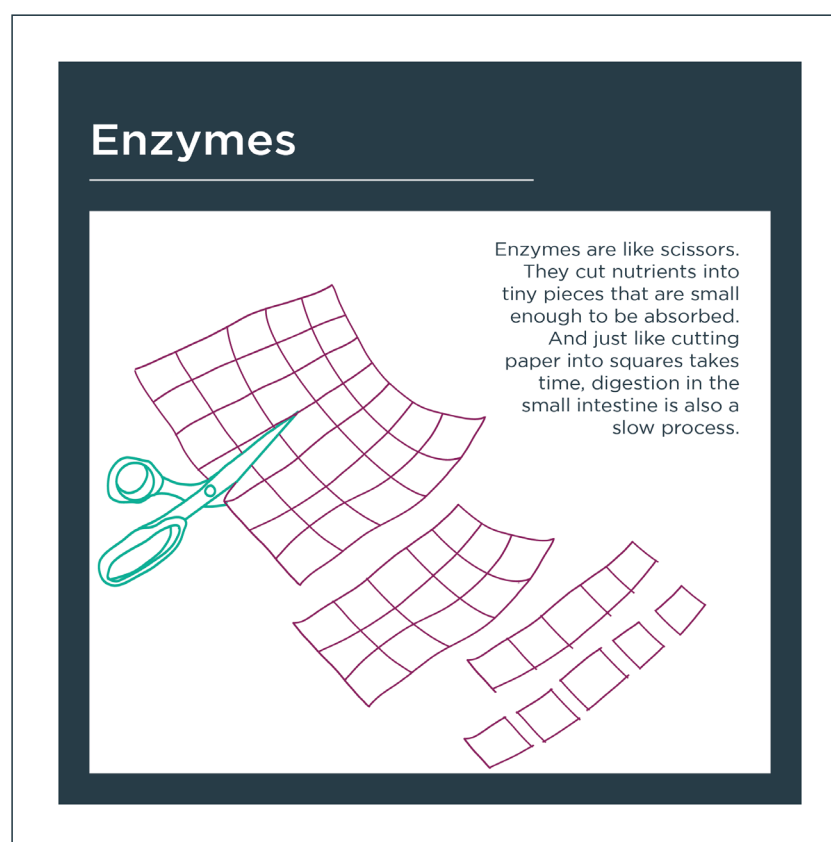
1. Digest protein, starch, sugars and oils for the horse; and
2. Absorb a lot of vitamins and minerals.

## Always Remember

1. Digestion in the small intestine happens by a process called enzyme digestion.
2. Enzymes are like little pairs of scissors that cut big nutrients into tiny pieces for absorption.
3. Enzyme digestion is slow so we need to give the small intestine enough time to fully 'cut up' and then absorb the nutrients that are passing through it.

## The Rules

1. Feed small meals. Small meals allow the stomach to do its job and just release small amounts of feed slowly into the small intestine.
2. Introduce new feed ingredients into the diet slowly to let the small intestine 'switch on' the scissors (enzymes) it needs to digest the feed.



## No Fibre Digesting Scissors

Horses don't have any enzymes in their small intestine that can digest fibre. And yet fibre is a horse's biggest source of dietary energy. How do they digest it then?

They made friends with several trillion microbes that live in their hindgut and it's these microbes that do the work of digesting fibre for them.

# THE HINDGUT

The hindgut's main jobs are to:

1. House the trillions of microbes that live in the hindgut and digest fibre for your horse; and
2. Absorb water and some minerals, including the electrolyte minerals.

## Always Remember

1. Your horse needs these microbes to extract energy from fibre.
2. There are GOOD and BAD microbes.
3. The microbes that LOVE fibre are the ones we call the 'Good Microbes'.
4. There are also microbes that love to ferment starch and sugars. If there are too many of these we call them the 'Bad Microbes'.

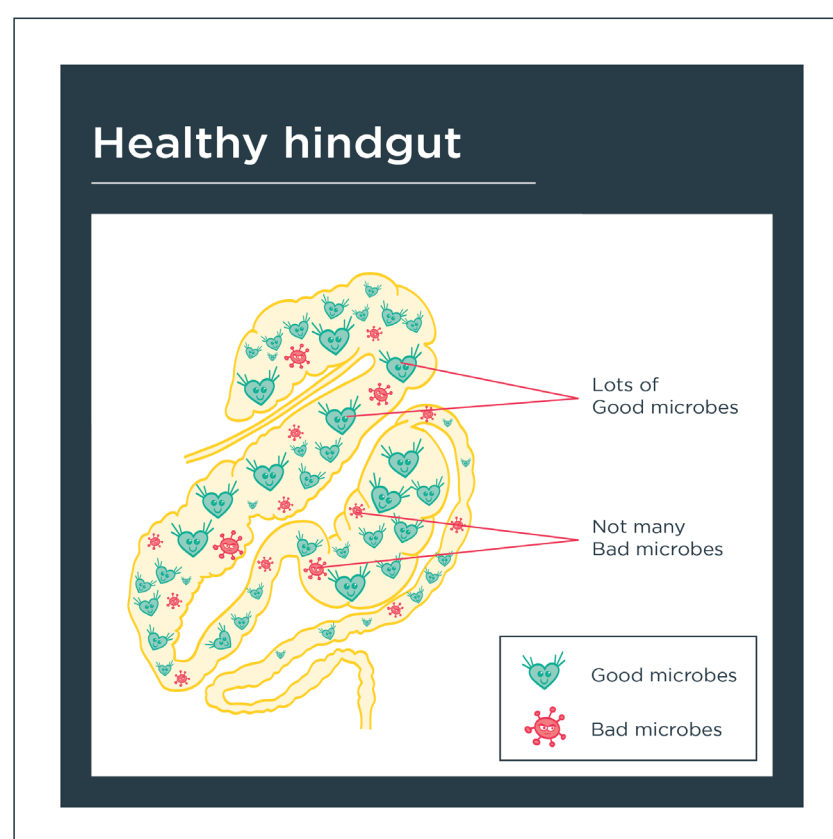
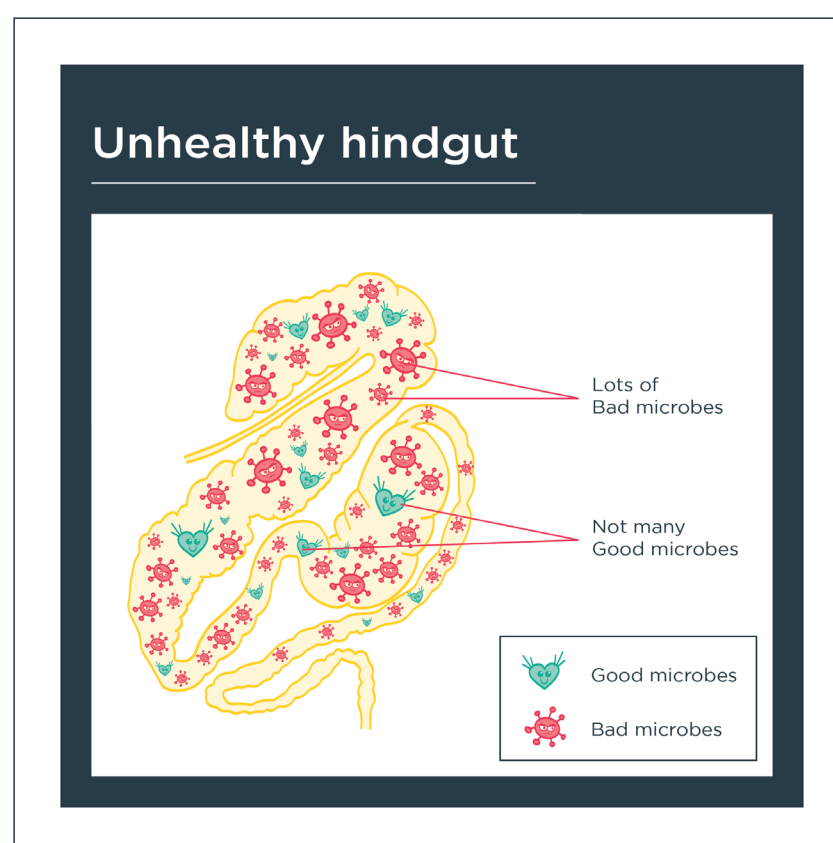
High grain diets will often reduce the population of good microbes and increase the number of bad microbes in your OTTs hindgut.

Feeding to rebalance the bacteria in your OTTs hindgut will give you a healthier, calmer, happier horse, who will maintain weight easily in the long term.

## The GOOD Microbes

The good microbes do so much more than just digest fibre. They also control behaviour, support immune function, produce vitamins and keep the gut lining healthy.

Keeping the hindgut microbes healthy is the **SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT** aspect of horse nutrition!



## THE HINDGUT (CONT..)

### The Rules

1. Feed LOTS of forage! Forage keeps the good microbes healthy. What is lots?  
24/7 Pasture or 10 to 15 kg of hay/day for your average size OTT.
2. Feed lots of fibre variety! Fibre variety creates microbe diversity. Microbe diversity is good for your OTTs physical and mental health.

Here is a list of feed ingredients that can give your horse fibre variety:

- Mixed species pasture (and even better with edible 'weeds')
  - Mixed species grassy hay
  - Lucerne Hay/Chaff/Cubes
  - Teff Hay Cubes
  - Sugarbeet Pulp
  - Lupin Hulls
  - Copra Meal
  - Soybean Hulls (as long as they are well heat treated)
  - Flax/Linseed
  - Chia Seeds
  - Hemp Hulls
3. Keep grains to a minimum and only use cooked grain. Too much grain or uncooked grains will give the 'BAD microbes' access to starch and this lets them build up their populations which isn't healthy for your horse.

## THE IMPORTANT BITS

To recap, the most important bits I want you to remember are:

1. Your **OTTs stomach should always be kept full**. An empty stomach creates a high risk of gastric ulcers! To keep the stomach full, feed lots of forage and remember to feed lucerne hay before you ride.
2. The small intestine needs time to digest feed. **Feeding in small meals** makes sure the stomach can do its job, and help the small intestine by only releasing feed slowly for digestion.
3. Your OTT has trillions of microbes in their hindgut. To keep the population of good microbes strong and your horse healthy feed **LOTS of forage**. And try to create a diet that has a lot of **fibre diversity** by feeding mixed pastures, multiple different types of hay and adding alternate fibres to the diet.

Now you have some understanding of how your horse's gut works and how and what to feed to keep your horse and their gut healthy, let's move on to look specifically at how to feed your OTT in their first 12 months!





## 2

# THE FIRST 12 MONTHS

## FRESH OFF THE TRACK

Most OTTs will have some challenges going on in their gut. So the first 6 months of feeding really needs to focus on re-establishing their gut health.

A healthy gut helps them to think properly, behave calmly and transition from racehorse to your horse. AND, excellent gut health also sets them up to gain weight easily in the future!

### Our main priorities in the first 6 months are to:

1. Support the healing of any gastric ulcers that may be present; and
2. Shift the hindgut microbes back to being dominated by the good fibre fermenters.

Remember that **gastric ulcers** are a veterinary issue and will need specific treatment in order to heal. Please work with your vet who will advise you on the correct diagnostics and treatments for your OTT.

Here is how to feed so you can help your OTT do that!

## MONTHS 1-6

We all know horses are individuals and exactly how you feed is going to depend on what suits your horse best. But here are some guidelines for feeding in the first 6 months...

### Month 1

#### 24/7 Forage

Your first priority in the first month is to get that big gut of your OTT full of forage again.

If you have pasture, then provide 24/7 access to pasture and feed lucerne hay twice a day. If your pasture is overgrazed or low quality, you should also provide access to high quality grassy hay.

If you don't have pasture, then provide 24/7 access to multiple types of grassy hay and feed lucerne hay twice a day.

## MONTH 1 (CONT..)

### Balanced Diet

You should also balance your OTTs diet to make sure it is meeting their requirement for vitamins, minerals and fatty acids. You can balance the diet with a high-quality balancer pellet + some flaxseed oil mixed into a small amount of lucerne chaff + free choice salt.

### Supplements

You may also choose to add a science-based supplement to support gut health. And if your OTTs hooves could use some extra TLC, a hoof supplement can be added.

### Example Diets – Month 1

The diets below are example diets for a 500 kg OTT (using products from Queensland Off-The-Track partners):

#### Diet Option 1

500 g/day	<b>Balancer pellet</b> (Pryde's EasiKeeper; grain free + hoof support)
60 ml/day	<b>Flaxseed oil</b>
500 g/day	<b>Lucerne chaff</b>
4 kg/day	<b>Lucerne hay</b>
24/7 Access	<b>Pasture and/or multiple types of grassy hay</b>
Free Choice	<b>Salt</b>
<b>Optional Supplements</b>	
130 g/day	<b>Gut health supplement</b> (Poseidon Digestive EQ)

#### Diet Option 2

1 kg/day	<b>Balancer pellet</b> (Pryde's Premium 250)
60 ml/day	<b>Flaxseed oil</b>
500 g/day	<b>Lucerne chaff</b>
4 kg/day	<b>Lucerne hay</b>
24/7 Access	<b>Pasture and/or multiple types of grassy hay</b>
Free Choice	<b>Salt</b>
<b>Optional Supplements</b>	
130 g/day	<b>Gut health supplement</b> (Poseidon Digestive EQ)

## Months 2-6

In months 2 to 6 we want to maintain your OTTs high forage intake and start to introduce some additional fibre variety. Fibre variety helps your OTT to help establish a diverse and healthy population of hindgut microbes.

There are a few options for achieving this:

### Option 1 – Alternate Fibres

Keep your OTTs diet the same as in Month 1 and add fibre variety using ingredients like:

- Sugarbeet pulp
- Lupin hulls
- Copra meal
- Flaxseed meal
- Well processed soybean hulls
- Teff hay cubes
- Chia seeds
- Hemp hulls; or
- Any other suitable alternate fibre you may have access to

### Option 2 – Complete Feed

The second option is to keep your OTTs forage base the same as in Month 1 and add a high fibre, low, or no-grain, complete feed.

Complete feeds have the advantage of simplifying your feed regime. There are complete feeds designed specifically for OTTs and lots of other low or no grain options that can work.

Remember to feed a complete feed at its recommended feeding rate so that you are keeping the diet balanced.

## MONTHS 2-6 (CONT..)

## Example Diets – Months 2-6

## Diet Option 1 - Alternate Fibres

500 g/day	<b>Balancer pellet</b> (Pryde's EasiKeeper; grain free + hoof support)
60 ml/day	<b>Flaxseed oil</b>
500 g/day	<b>Lucerne chaff</b>
200 to 500 g/day*	<b>Sugarbeet pulp</b>
200 to 500 g/day*	<b>Copra meal</b>
100 g/day	<b>Hemp hulls and hearts</b>
4 kg/day	<b>Lucerne hay</b>
24/7 Access	<b>Pasture and/or multiple types of grassy hay</b>
Free Choice	<b>Salt</b>
<b>Optional Supplements</b>	
130 g/day	<b>Gut health supplement</b> (Poseidon Digestive EQ)

\* Adjust the amount of these ingredients fed up or down according to your OTTs behaviour/energy level.

## Diet Option 2 - Complete Feed

1.5 to 2 kg/day	<b>Complete feed</b> (Pryde's Easi Off-The-Track)
60 ml/day	<b>Flaxseed oil</b>
500 g/day	<b>Lucerne chaff</b>
4 kg/day	<b>Lucerne hay</b>
24/7 Access	<b>Pasture and/or multiple types of grassy hay</b>
Free Choice	<b>Salt</b>
<b>Optional Supplements</b>	
130 g/day	<b>Gut health supplement</b> (Poseidon Digestive EQ)

The diets below are example diets for a 500 kg OTT in light work (using products from Queensland Off-The-Track partners):

**Be Mindful of Your OTTs Energy Level**

Be aware that adding these fibres or a complete feed will increase your OTTs dietary energy intake and that has the potential to change their behaviour.

You will need to find the 'sweet spot' for your horse, where you can feed additional fibres without affecting

**Months 6-12**

Now that you've laid a foundation of gut health and given yourself and your OTT 6 months to build a relationship, you can start to think about putting additional weight and muscle on your OTT.

BUT, before we continue... there is one REALLY important thing I need you to remember at this point. And that is...

**Weight gain diets WILL affect behaviour!**

The amount of energy in a horse's diet is usually reflected in its behaviour.

Weight gain diets are, by necessity, high energy diets. So they can, and often will cause high energy or hyperactive behaviour.

So before you embark on putting weight on your OTT, please think carefully about how you are going to do it. Your safety and your horses ability to successfully transition to their new career with you is at stake!

## MONTHS 6-12 (CONT..)

One excellent option to consider is to turn them out to pasture and feed them their high energy, weight gain diet while there is no requirement for them to behave under saddle!

If you do want to keep riding while feeding a weight gain diet, please use the strategy shared in Video 3 and in the next chapter of this e-Book to help you successfully manage their behaviour.

### How To Feed For Weight Gain

The good news is, feeding for weight gain is pretty simple!

You just need to increase the amount of calories, or energy in your OTTs diet so that they have some 'leftover' energy they can use to put on weight!

The even better news is, because of the work you have put in in the first 6 months of feeding, **your OTTs hindgut should now be full of microbes that are good at digesting fibre.** Which makes feeding for weight gain a whole lot easier!

#### Step 1

The first step in feeding for weight gain is **keep feeding for gut health.** The last thing you want to do at this point in time is undo all your hard work from the last 6 months!

Keep feeding:

- As much pasture and grassy hay as your OTT wants to eat\*
- Lucerne hay twice a day
- Any alternate fibres you may have added to the diet for fibre diversity; and
- Your balancer pellet or complete feed to keep the diet balanced.

\*If your OTT is a total guts and eating more than 15 kg of hay per day, use a slow feeder to keep forage intake under control.

#### Step 2

With this gut-friendly, high fibre diet as your base, you do can one, or a combination of the following, to encourage weight gain:

#### 1. Add or increase your high energy fibres

Beet pulp, lupin hulls and copra meal are high in energy so they make it easy for you to feed excess calories to encourage weight gain. They also tend to provide a cooler energy than other high energy ingredients like cereal grains.

#### 2. Add or increase oil

Oils are the highest energy feed ingredient available so they are excellent for weight gain. And they also tend to be a nice cool source of energy.

Flaxseed oil and canola oil are the best because they are higher in omega 3 than other oils.

You can feed up to 2 cups of oil per day. But introduce the oil slowly, starting with 1/4 cup/day and increasing by no more than 1/4 cup/week.

#### 3. Add legumes and oilseeds

Feed ingredients like lupins and very well cooked full fat soybean are high in energy, making them perfect for weight gain diets.

PLUS they have the added advantage of being high in quality protein which helps your OTT to build muscle.

#### 4. Add or increase digestible cereal grains

Oats, extruded barley and Australian ricebran are high energy ingredients that do an excellent job of encouraging weight gain.

Use them with a little bit of caution as they are potentially more likely to cause hyperactive behaviour.

It is important to keep the amount of grain in the diet controlled to maintain hindgut health and keep the risk of gastric ulcers low. As a general rule, don't exceed 2 kg/day of these ingredients combined, for a 500 kg OTT.

#### 5. Increase your complete feed

If you are feeding a complete feed, you can increase the amount you are feeding to encourage weight gain. But be sure to keep it within the range suggested for your horse's weight and workload.

If your horse needs more energy on top of what the complete feed provides you can add additional high energy fibres, oils or grains to your complete feed.

## MONTHS 6-12 (CONT..)

**Example Weight Gain Diets**

Here are some safe and effective weight gain diets to use as a starting point. The diets below are for a 500 kg OTT in light to moderate work (using products from Queensland Off-The-Track partners):

**Weight Gain Diet Option 1 - Grain Free Balancer + Fibres + Oil**

500 g/day	<b>Balancer pellet</b> (Pryde's EasiKeeper; grain free + hoof support)
250 ml/day	<b>Flaxseed oil</b>
500 g/day	<b>Lucerne chaff</b>
200 g to 1 kg/day	<b>Sugarbeet pulp</b>
200 g to 1 kg/day	<b>Copra meal</b>
300 g/day	<b>Extruded full fat soybean</b> (Pryde's ProteinPak)
200 g/day	<b>Hemp hulls and hearts</b>
4 kg/day	<b>Lucerne hay</b>
24/7 Access	<b>Pasture and/or multiple types of grassy hay</b>
Free Choice	<b>Salt</b>
<b>Optional Supplements</b>	
130 g/day	<b>Gut health supplement</b> (Poseidon Digestive EQ)

**Weight Gain Diet Option 2 - Balancer + Fibres + Grains + Oil**

1 kg/day	<b>Balancer pellet</b> (Pryde's Premium 250)
250 ml/day	<b>Flaxseed oil</b>
500 g/day	<b>Lucerne chaff</b>
200 g to 1 kg/day	<b>Sugarbeet pulp</b>
200 g to 1 kg/day	<b>Extruded barley</b> (Pryde's PowerPak)
200 g to 1 kg/day	<b>Australian stabilised rice bran</b> (CopRice R)
300 g/day	<b>Extruded full fat soybean</b> (Pryde's ProteinPak)
200 g/day	<b>Hemp hulls and hearts</b>
4 kg/day	<b>Lucerne hay</b>
24/7 Access	<b>Pasture and/or multiple types of grassy hay</b>
Free Choice	<b>Salt</b>
<b>Optional Supplements</b>	
130 g/day	<b>Gut health supplement</b> (Poseidon Digestive EQ)

**Weight Gain Diet Option 3 - Complete Feed + Oil**

1.5 to 2 kg/day	<b>Complete feed</b> (Pryde's Easi Off-The-Track)
250 ml/day	<b>Flaxseed oil</b>
500 g/day	<b>Lucerne chaff</b>
4 kg/day	<b>Lucerne hay</b>
24/7 Access	<b>Pasture and/or grassy hay</b>
Free Choice	<b>Salt</b>
<b>Optional Supplements</b>	
130 g/day	<b>Gut health supplement</b> (Poseidon Digestive EQ)

**Weight Gain Diet Option 4 - Complete Feed + Fibres + Grains + Oil**

1.5 to 2 kg/day	<b>Complete feed</b> (Pryde's Easi Off-The-Track)
250 ml/day	<b>Flaxseed oil</b>
500 g/day	<b>Lucerne chaff</b>
200 g to 1 kg/day	<b>Sugarbeet pulp</b>
200 g to 1 kg/day	<b>Extruded barley</b> (Pryde's PowerPak)
200 g to 1 kg/day	<b>Australian stabilised rice bran</b> (CopRice R)
4 kg/day	<b>Lucerne hay</b>
24/7 Access	<b>Pasture and/or multiple types of grassy hay</b>
Free Choice	<b>Salt</b>
<b>Optional Supplements</b>	
130 g/day	<b>Gut health supplement</b> (Poseidon Digestive EQ)

## MONTHS 6-12 (CONT..)

**Quick Tips for Building Muscle**

The diets above will help with building muscle. BUT sometimes you need to pay a bit of extra attention to do a great job of muscle building.

Here are two quick tips to help!

**Tip 1**

Look for balancer pellets and complete feeds that use high quality protein. Soybean meal or full fat soybean are the best plant-based muscle building proteins we have so choose balancer pellets or complete feeds that use soybean.

**Tip #2**

Feed quality protein immediately after work

Giving a small meal of high quality protein feeds the muscles at a time that is most effective in achieving muscle building!

Here is a post work muscle building recipe to get you started:

250 g	<b>Extruded full fat soybean</b> (Pryde's ProteinPak)
100 g	<b>Whey protein concentrate</b>
200 g	<b>Lucerne chaff</b>

**THE IMPORTANT BITS****Month 1**

Get your OTTs gut full of forage by providing **24/7 access to pasture and/or multiple types of grassy hay** plus **lucerne hay twice a day**.

And **get the diet balanced** using a high-quality balancer pellet and some flaxseed oil mixed into a small amount of lucerne chaff + free choice salt.

**Months 2 to 6**

Using the high fibre, balanced diet from month one as your base, **introduce fibre variety** into the diet to support the gut in establishing a healthy and diverse microbial population.

**Months 7 to 12**

Maintaining the gut friendly diet you have fed until this point, you can now **start to increase or add new higher energy ingredients** to the diet to encourage weight gain.

**And remember...**

Weight gain diets can affect behaviour so be sure to **monitor behaviour** and **reduce the higher energy ingredients** being fed **if your OTTs behaviour is too energetic**.





## 3

# OTT NUTRITION INTO THE FUTURE

It is hard for me to give you very specific feeding advice for your OTT, as what and how much you will need to feed depends on what you are doing with your OTT and how much work they are in.

But there are 4 feeding rules I want you to always follow, regardless of what your new OTTs career is, to keep them their healthiest, happiest, most successful selves!

## RULE #1 FEED HAY BEFORE YOU RIDE

This is the most valuable piece of advice I can give you... feed hay before you ride!

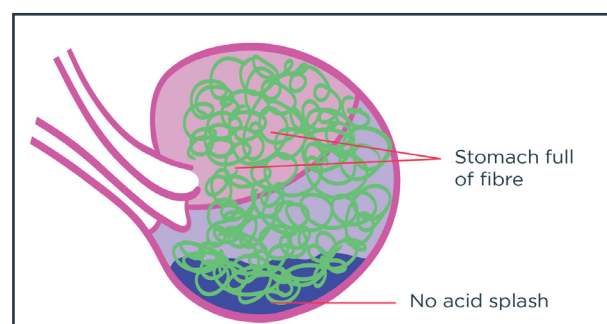
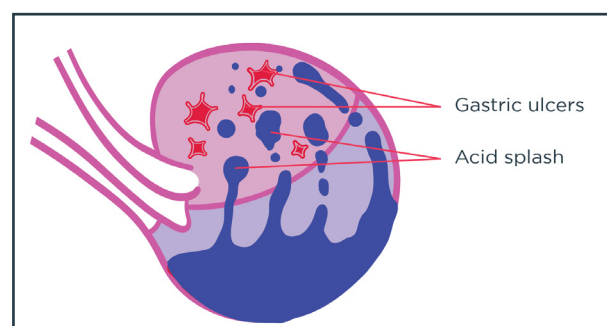
An empty stomach will have a pool of acid sitting at the bottom.

If you ride your horse on an empty stomach, or even a partially empty stomach, that acid splashes up to the top of the stomach.

This acid splash will:

1. Create squamous gastric ulcers ; and
2. Cause discomfort or pain which will lead to a distracted or misbehaving horse.

Feeding hay before you ride fills the stomach with fibre and saliva. The fibre creates a physical barrier that stops acid splash and the saliva dilutes the acid so it is less likely to cause pain and ulcers.





## RULE #1 FEED HAY BEFORE YOU RIDE (CONT..)

**REMEMBER: Lucerne Hay is Best!**

Here is a guide for how much hay to feed before you ride (right).

To make being ridden a safe and enjoyable experience for both of you... feed hay before you ride!

### How much hay to feed before you ride

FOR A 500KG HORSE

 <p><b>2 kg</b></p> <p>If your horse hasn't eaten for the last 2 or more hours</p>	 <p><b>1 - 2 kg</b></p> <p>If your horse hasn't eaten for the last 1/2 - 2 hours</p>	 <p><b>0.5 - 1 kg</b></p> <p>If your horse was grazing/eating hay right up until when you caught them</p>
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# RULE #2 FORAGE! FORAGE! FORAGE!

Horses need forage for their physical and mental health! Forage plays several important roles including:

1. It keeps the hindgut microbes healthy so they can do everything from digesting fibre to keeping the hooves healthy and regulating your OTTs behaviour and immune function.
2. It keeps the stomach full to dramatically reduce the risk of squamous gastric ulcers.
3. It keeps your horse chewing and in their calming and happy 'head down' position for long periods of time; and
4. It provides a bulk of the nutrients your horse needs in their diet.

### How much forage?

Here is how much forage you should feed:

If you have pasture, then 24/7 access to pasture is ideal! If you are feeding hay, here are some guidelines for a 500 kg OTT:

<p><b>&lt;7.5 kg/day</b></p> <p>Too little</p>	<p><b>10 - 15 kg/day</b></p> <p>Ideal</p>	<p><b>&gt;15 kg</b></p> <p>Might be too much*</p>
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\* If your horse wants to eat more than 15 kg of hay per day it will start to move too quickly through the gut and not be fully digested. If your horse is easily chewing through this much hay, find a slow feeding system to slow down their hay intake!

Forage is the most important part of your OTT's diet, BUT remember that forage, by itself, is not enough. And this is why feeding rule #3 is so crucial!

# RULE #3 FEED A BALANCED DIET

A 'balanced diet' is a diet that provides all of the nutrients your horse needs on a daily basis.

Those nutrients include the energy (or calories), protein, vitamins and minerals that your OTT needs to stay healthy and do the work you are asking of them.

Australian forages, grains and fibres are typically low in the minerals copper, zinc, selenium and iodine and will contain variable levels of other minerals like calcium and phosphorus as well as vitamins. So we need to use a balancer pellet or complete feed to 'top up' the nutrients missing from forages, grains and fibres so that the diet is 'balanced'.

## Example Balanced Diets

The diets below are example diets for a 500 kg OTT in light to moderate work (using products from Queensland Off-The-Track partners):

For horses who are holding their weight and muscle on a forage only diet, all you need to do is add a balancer pellet or a vitamin & mineral supplement to top up the nutrients that are missing from the forage. And I like to add a little bit of flaxseed oil to keep their coats shiny and healthy!

### Balanced Diet Option 1 - Balancer Pellet Only

1 kg/day	<b>Balancer pellet</b> (Pryde's 'Essentials 150' or 'Premium 250')
60 ml/day	<b>Flaxseed oil</b>
500 g/day	<b>Lucerne chaff</b>
2 kg/day	<b>Lucerne hay</b>
24/7 Access	<b>Pasture and/or multiple types of grassy hay</b>
Free Choice	<b>Salt</b>

OR you can use a complete feed at the correct feeding rate for your horse.

### Balanced Diet Option 3 - Complete Feed

1.5 to 3 kg/day	<b>Complete feed</b> (Pryde's EasiSport or Easi-Off-The-Track or EasiGoing)
120 ml/day	<b>Flaxseed oil</b>
500 g/day	<b>Lucerne chaff</b>
2 kg/day	<b>Lucerne hay</b>
24/7 Access	<b>Pasture and/or multiple types of grassy hay</b>
Free Choice	<b>Salt</b>

For horses who need more than forage and a balancer pellet to hold their weight and muscle, you can add your own higher energy and protein ingredients.

### Balanced Diet Option 2 - Balancer + Fibres + Grains

1 kg/day	<b>Balancer pellet</b> (Pryde's 'Essentials 150' or 'Premium 250')
0 to 4 kg/day	Any combination of <b>higher energy/protein ingredients</b> (see the list below for some of my favourites)
120 ml/day	<b>Flaxseed oil</b>
500 g/day	<b>Lucerne chaff</b>
2 kg/day	<b>Lucerne hay</b>
24/7 Access	<b>Pasture and/or multiple types of grassy hay</b>
Free Choice	<b>Salt</b>

Some of my favourite higher energy/protein ingredients are:

- Lupins
- High energy fibres like sugarbeet pulp or lupin hulls
- Full Fat Soybean
- Copra Meal
- Oils, with a preference for flaxseed oil
- Australian stabilised rice bran
- Extruded barley; and
- Oats

## RULE #3 FEED A BALANCED DIET (CONT..)

Remember that feeding these higher energy ingredients can affect your horse's behaviour... Feed too much energy, and you may end up with an OTT that has too much energy. So our Rule #4 is...

# RULE #4 MATCH DIET ENERGY TO WORKLOAD

A horse's diet can affect their behaviour. If you feed too much energy, you might end up with an OTT that has too much energy.

To control your OTTs energy and behaviour, you need to **match diet energy to workload**. And you do this by adjusting your horse's diet regularly... daily if you have to!

In the example in video 3, our theoretical rider is only able to ride their horse 4 days per week. BUT, they feed their horse the same amount of feed every day.

And this causes the horse to be too hyperactive and edgy on the first two rides for the week.

DAY	RIDES	FEED	BEHAVIOUR
Monday	No Riding	2 kg Complete feed	
Tuesday	No Riding	2 kg Complete feed	
Wednesday	No Riding	2 kg Complete feed	
Thursday	Ridden	2 kg Complete feed	Hyperactive
Friday	Ridden	2 kg Complete feed	Still on edge
Saturday	Ridden	2 kg Complete feed	Better
Sunday	Ridden	2 kg Complete feed	Perfect

Feeding the same amount of feed, every day, to this horse, allows the horse to build up a supply of excess energy. And that energy 'comes out' in their behaviour in the first couple of days under saddle.

To avoid this scenario, our theoretical rider should adjust their diet according to if they ride and how their horse feels... feeding less energy on the days they don't ride and more when they feel the horse needs it.

A feeding regime where diet energy is matched to workload might look like this (see table overleaf):

## RULE #4 MATCH DIET ENERGY TO WORKLOAD (CONT..)

DAY	RIDES	FEED	BEHAVIOUR
Monday	No Riding	0.5 kg Balancer pellet	
Tuesday	No Riding	0.5 kg Balancer pellet	
Wednesday	No Riding	0.5 kg Balancer pellet	
Thursday	Ridden	0.5 kg Balancer pellet	Calm
Friday	Ridden	1.5 kg Complete feed	Beautiful
Saturday	Ridden	2 kg Complete feed	Fun
Sunday	Ridden	1.5 kg Complete feed	Perfect

If your riding schedule is anything like mine it won't be predictable like this. If that is the case for you, then just adjust what you feed DAILY ... according to when you ride and how your horse feels.

The most important thing is to maintain their forage intake but reduce their higher energy feed on days off... so that when you do get back to riding, you don't have an off the track that is full of unused energy waiting to go PING!

## THE IMPORTANT BITS

We have covered a lot... so to remind you of the really important bits, remember:

- 1. Feed hay before you ride, with lucerne hay being the best choice.**
- 2. Keep your horse's diet forage based, with the ideal situation being 24/7 access to pasture or hay or both!**
- 3. Keep your diet balanced by using complete feeds or balancer pellets or a vitamin & mineral supplement; and**
- 4. Adjust your horse's diet regularly, daily if you have to, to control dietary energy so you can keep control of behaviour.**

By following these 4 feeding rules, you will have a healthy, happy, calm, but responsive horse to thoroughly enjoy your time with well into the future!

ENJOY THE  
JOURNEY