

## HOW TO CHOOSE A FEED BALANCER SUPPLEMENT

We all know the importance of our own diet being balanced, and horses are no different. A balanced diet is required to keep horses in good condition and allow them to perform the work asked of them. Recovery from exercise can be influenced by the quality of the diet.



- Minerals: Calcium, Phosphorus, Sodium, Magnesium, Potassium,
- Trace elements: Cobalt, Copper, Manganese, Zinc, Selenium, Iron, Iodine
- Protein
- Prebiotics: FOS and Brewer's yeast
- Probiotics: Saccharomyces cerevisiae
- Linseed: high in omega 3's for a shiny coat

### Which Horses will benefit?

- Horses not on a full ration of concentrate feed
- Competition horses
- Horses on a restricted diet
- Horses on a weight loss programme
- Horses that are sugar sensitive
- Horses that need digestive support
- Horses being fed 'straights'
- Veteran horses
- Pregnant mares

### What is a Balancer?

- A balancer is designed to supply vitamins, minerals and trace elements that are commonly lacking in every day forage
- They also supply protein to support muscle development and repair
- The ideal balancer should supply prebiotics and probiotics to support healthy digestive function
- Balancers should be sugar free

### Why Feed a Balancer?

- Most horses do not always receive the full ration of concentrate feed that is recommended by manufacturer guidelines, which means they can miss out on vital nutrients.
- In addition, vitamins and minerals are often low in preserved forage, such as hay or haylage, and where grazing is less than optimum, such as closely grazed paddocks, fast growing grass and in areas of high rainfall.
- Even minor shortfalls of these vital nutrients can lead to poor performance or a lackluster appearance.

### What should a balancer contain?

- Vitamins: Biotin, Niacin, Folic Acid, Pantothenic Acid, Vitamin A, Vitamin B1, Vitamin B12, Vitamin B2, Vitamin B6, Vitamin D3, Vitamin E, Vitamin K, Choline Chloride.



### What type of Balancer should I choose, Powder or Pellets?

#### Pellets:

A pelleted feed balancer is a lot like a vitamin/mineral supplement for your horse, but differs in the amount of protein and macro minerals that it adds to your horse's diet.

Balancers are available with a range of protein levels. Deciding on which balancer to use depends on the quality and protein level in available forage as well as the requirements of the horse, physiological state and level of exercise.

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It is recommended to carry out a forage and soil analysis in order to highlight any nutrient excesses, deficiencies or imbalances that may affect the horse.

Horse feeds are formulated to be fed at a certain rate. Some horses do not receive the recommended feeding rate because it provides too many mega joules of digestible energy for the work load of that horse, and providing the whole ration could lead to obesity. When fed below the recommended feeding rate, the horse may not receive the adequate levels of protein, vitamins, and minerals.

Balancers are a very versatile feedstuff. They can be fed alone, in addition to the forage to support the short fall of trace elements and protein or they can be added to a concentrate ration when extra nutritional fortification is required. Equine diets that are formulated using straights normally require the extra support of a balancer. Pelleted feed balancers can be expensive to feed especially if you have more than one horse or a larger sized horse.

## Powders:

Powdered vitamin and mineral supplements can also differ in the amount of protein and macro minerals that they provide for your horses diet. It is advisable to look at the ingredients they contain before choosing as some may not deliver sufficient levels to support a balanced diet.

Many may contain a level of sugar in various forms: Glucose, Dextrose, Maltodextrin or Dextrin. These are often used as fillers/ stabilisers. When choosing a supplement be aware that the label should list the ingredient with the highest inclusion rate first, therefore you can determine what you are getting from your supplement. Although sugar does have a place in the horses diet there are many sugar intolerant horses and ponies whose diets need to be monitored carefully so as not to receive excess levels.



Powders can be added to straights or low forage diets to ensure all the required vitamins and minerals are received. Feeding a powder can be more cost effective than feeding a balancer and remain fresher for longer, especially when it is sealed in sachets and in a plastic container to help prevent environmental contaminants such as damp or rodent interference.

Although feeding a powder means it must be added to a high quality chaff or chop, this increases the chew time of the horse producing saliva which is a natural buffer, but saliva is only produced when horses chew. Acid is produced in the stomach of a horse 24 hours a day and horses are designed to spend 18 hours out of 24 hours eating.

The lowest part of the horse's stomach is most acidic and most liquid, as you move up the stomach it becomes less acidic and less liquid with a fibre mat at the top that protects the squamous region (that lacks its own protection) when the horse is not eating.

This is why it is so important for horses not to go without food for extended periods of time as this fibre mat and layering will be passed out of the stomach in around an hour and leave the stomach without any protection.

## Nettex V.I.P.® In The Balance

- V.I.P.® In The Balance has higher levels of active ingredients
- V.I.P.® In The Balance has a higher specification digestive support package
- V.I.P.® In The Balance is a high quality nutritional and digestive balancer that has a formulation that is more economical to feed.
- Sugar free
- Vet Approved
- Balancer with pre and probiotics
- 2kg tub (contains 2 x 1kg foil sachets)
- 40 days supply for an average 500kg Horse
- RRP £34.99
- Cost per day = 87p
- Visible results within 14 days
- 30 day Money back guarantee
- Supports clean sport

