

What Sets Apart Broodmare Nutrition Different?

Nutrition for broodmares is different from feeding a horse for general maintenance, training, or stallion condition. A mare's needs vary through pregnancy and lactation, and the right horse feed has to feed both her body and the growing foal. The goal is a balanced ration that promotes a healthy body condition score, supports foal development, and keeps the mare fit enough for milk production after foaling.

During early pregnancy, many mares get along well on good forage and hay with only modest adjustments. As late gestation approaches, nutrient demands rise because the fetus develops rapidly and the mare's calorie density needs increase. After foaling, lactation becomes the most intensive stage of all. Milk production requires more energy, protein, calcium, phosphorus, and micronutrients than maintenance feeding alone.

This is why broodmare feeding should always be built around forage. High-quality forage and hay provide the foundation for intestinal health, while concentrate choices fill nutrient gaps. A mare with poor bodyweight or one that struggles to hold condition may need a more nutrient-dense horse feed, but overloading grain is not the answer. The best approach is to assess her body condition score regularly and adjust feed based on stage of pregnancy, milk output, and overall condition.

One more key difference is nutrient quality. Broodmares need highly digestible ingredients, not just calories. Amino acids, especially lysine, are important for tissue repair, milk production, and foal development. Mineral balance is equally important, since calcium and phosphorus must be supplied in the right proportions. A mare that eats enough feed but not enough usable nutrients can still lose condition or produce lower-quality milk.

What Essential Nutrients Should Horse Feed for Broodmares Include?

The right horse feed for broodmares should be high in nutritional value and formulated for pregnancy, lactation, and recovery after foaling. Rather than looking only at the amount fed, evaluate what each ration provides per serving. The feed tag is the place to start because it lists protein, fat, fiber, minerals, and vitamins in a form that helps compare options.

Protein is vital for growth, milk production, and foal development. Broodmares need quality protein, not just a high percentage on the label. The amino acids in that protein count, especially lysine, which helps build muscle and supports the growing foal. A feed with adequate protein and a strong amino acid profile is often better than a cheaper ration with lower digestibility.

Energy helps keep the mare in good condition through late gestation and lactation. Energy can come from fiber, fat, or starch. For broodmares, digestible fiber and fat are often easier on intestinal health than heavy grain loads. A balanced ration should deliver enough calorie density to prevent weight loss without pushing the mare into excess starch.

Calcium and **phosphorus** are essential for skeletal development in the foal and for the mare's own metabolic needs. The ratio matters, not just the numbers. Too much of one and too little of the other can interfere with mineral balance. A good broodmare horse feed will be formulated to support these minerals in the proper range.

Other important features include micronutrients like copper, zinc, selenium, and vitamins A and E. These support immune function, hoof quality, and reproductive health. A feed that is highly digestible and well balanced will usually outperform a generic product that looks fine on paper but lacks targeted broodmare support.

Kinds of Horse Feed for Pregnant mares

There are several types of horse feed used for broodmares, and every type works differently depending on body condition, forage quality, and phase of reproduction. Picking among these common types of horse feed starts with the mare's actual needs, not brand popularity.

Horse feed grain is the traditional concentrate source. It is energy-rich and often palatable, which helps mares that need more calories. However, grain can be too starch-heavy for some horses if fed in large amounts. It is best used as part of a balanced ration rather than the whole plan.

Sweet feed for horses is another familiar option. It usually combines grains with molasses for taste and palatability. Some mares eat it readily, but it can be less ideal for horses that need lower starch intake or tighter mineral balance. Sweet feed can be useful for picky eaters, yet it is not always the most nutrient-dense option for broodmares.

Complete feed is designed to supply both forage replacement and concentrate nutrition. That can be helpful when hay quality is inconsistent or when a mare has trouble chewing enough forage. Complete feed is often highly digestible and may be a smart choice for older mares or those needing extra support in late gestation and lactation.

Beyond these categories, many rations come as a **pellet** or **mash**. Pellets are convenient and consistent, while mash can improve palatability and water intake for some horses. What matters most is choosing a feed form the mare will eat reliably while still meeting her nutrient requirements.

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Best Horse Feed Brands for Broodmares

The best horse feed brands for broodmares are the ones that combine consistent quality with a strong nutrient profile. The best horse feed brands are not chosen by name alone; they are chosen by reviewing the feed tag, evaluating the ingredient profile, and adjusting the ration to the mare's stage of pregnancy or lactation. Among commonly discussed options are Purina horse feed, Tribute horse feed, Nutrena horse feed, and Triumph horse feed.

Purina horse feed is widely noted for product variety and formulation depth. Tribute horse feed and Nutrena horse feed also deliver targeted nutrition plans that can fit broodmares well. Triumph horse feed is another brand many owners review when looking for a balanced ration with dependable digestibility and palatability. The right pick depends on forage quality, the mare's body condition score, and whether the priority is maintenance, milk production, or weight gain.

When comparing brands, focus on calorie density, protein quality, mineral balance, and whether the feed is labeled for growth, reproduction, or performance. A mare in late gestation may need something different from a mare in peak lactation. A feed that works for one broodmare may be too rich or too light for another.

Purina's Options for Broodmares

Purina offers several products that are commonly considered for broodmare feeding. **Purina Impact Performance**, **Purina Impact Horse Feed**, and **Purina Performance Horse Feed** are often discussed because they deliver strong nutritional support and good digestibility. Depending on the mare's needs, these feeds may supply the energy, protein, and micronutrients that support pregnancy and milk production.

For broodmares, the most useful Purina option is the one that matches the mare's bodyweight, forage intake, and overall condition. A mare needing extra calories might benefit from a more calorie-dense formula, while another may do better with a moderate feed paired with excellent hay. Always review the feed tag and adjust the amount gradually.

Additional Well-known Retail Feed Choices

Retail feed availability matters because many horse owners shop from nearby stock. **Tractor Supply horse feed**, **Tractor Supply sweet feed**, **Chewy horse feed**, and **Runnings horse feed** are commonly searched options. These sellers may offer a range of brands and formulas, so the feeding profile can vary widely.

The main concern is not the shop but whether the product supports broodmare nutrition goals. A sweet feed from one retailer may be a good fit for a mare that needs more palatability, while another formula may be better as a complete feed or a lower-starch option. Compare ingredients, guaranteed analysis, and recommended feeding rates before deciding.

How Much Horse Feed Should a Broodmare Need?

No single answer exists for how much a broodmare should eat because the correct amount depends on body condition, hay quality, pregnancy stage, lactation, and bodyweight. A practical horse feeding chart can help you estimate a starting point, but the final ration should be based on the mare's condition and performance as a broodmare rather than a generic number.

As a general rule, begin with forage. Hay should make up the *anonymous* majority of intake, and many mares do well when forage is the foundation of the diet. Then add concentrate only as needed to meet energy, protein, calcium, and phosphorus requirements. In early pregnancy, many mares need little more than maintenance. In late gestation, nutritional demands rise. In lactation, feed intake often needs to increase further to support milk production.

If you are asking how much grain to feed a horse per day, the real answer is: enough to fill the nutrient gap, but not so much that the diet becomes starch-heavy or unbalanced. Break concentrate into sensible servings and avoid large grain meals that can stress digestion. A mare with low hay intake may need a different plan than one on excellent forage.

Use bodyweight as your anchor. A larger mare will need more total feed than a smaller mare, but the increase should still be guided by digestibility and body condition score. Monitor changes every few weeks and adjust slowly. If the mare is losing weight, review forage quality first, then reassess the concentrate program.

Top Horse Feed for Weight Gain in Lean Broodmares

The right horse feed for adding weight in a thin broodmare is one that improves calorie intake without taxing the digestive system. A mare that is underweight needs a plan built around forage, digestible fiber, and controlled calories rather than a sudden jump in grain. The aim is consistent improvement in body condition score and better support for foal development and lactation.

A **conditioned feed** can assist because it is often formulated to be calorie-dense while remaining manageable for the gut. Adding a **fat supplement** is another practical option since fat offers concentrated energy with less starch. This can raise calorie density without pushing overfeeding grain.

Digestible fiber is especially useful in thin broodmares. Fiber sources can support intake safely and support intestinal health. In many cases, combining a higher-fiber complete feed with quality hay and a measured fat

supplement works better than relying on heavy horse feed grain alone.

Keep in mind that weight gain should be slow. If the mare is thin because of dental problems, parasites, poor hay, or lactation demands, nutrition alone may not solve the issue. The most effective plan is a balanced ration, regular bodyweight checks, and careful monitoring during late gestation and after foaling.

How Much Does Horse Feed Cost?

Horse feed cost varies based on manufacturer, formulation, bag size, and local availability. A broodmare ration designed for reproduction or growth may cost more than a basic maintenance feed, but it can also reduce costs by delivering better nutrition in smaller amounts. Quality matters because a less effective feed may lead to more total feeding and a higher feeding budget overall.

A helpful way to compare options is with a **horse feed cost calculator**. This lets you estimate the real cost per day rather than just the **bag price**. A cheaper bag can be misleading if the mare needs more pounds per day to get the same nutrition. A more concentrated formula may appear more expensive but actually work better for your budget.

When comparing brands, compare cost with feeding rate, not just the shelf tag. A ration that delivers more nutrients per pound can reduce waste and improve overall efficiency. For broodmares, the best value usually comes from a feed that supports pregnancy, lactation, and foal development without requiring excessive top-dressing or add-ons.

Horse Feed Errors to Avoid

One of the biggest mistakes is thinking all feeds are the same. Many owners look only at price and end up choosing the **worst horse feed brands** for their mare's needs. A brand is not always wrong, but a feed can be a poor fit if it lacks the right protein, mineral balance, or digestibility for broodmare nutrition.

Feeding excess grain is another common mistake. Too much grain can create an unbalanced ration and may hurt intestinal health. Broodmares usually do better with a forage-first plan and measured concentrate portions. If more calories are needed, consider a complete feed, fat supplement, or better hay before dramatically increasing grain.

Abrupt diet changes are risky because they can disrupt digestion and feed intake. Any new horse feed should be introduced slowly over several days. This gives the mare's gut time to adapt and helps prevent loss of condition or appetite.

A common belief is that extra treats are the same as nutrition. **Offering carrots to horses** is fine as an occasional treat, but carrots do not replace a balanced ration. They do not supply the protein, energy, calcium, phosphorus, or micronutrients needed for pregnancy and lactation. Treats should stay separate from the actual nutrition plan.

FAQs About Feeding Broodmares

What is the best horse feed for broodmares during pregnancy?

The best horse feed for broodmares during pregnancy is a nutrient-rich, highly digestible ration that supports broodmare nutrition without excess starch. Look for good protein quality, balanced minerals, and enough energy to maintain a healthy body condition score. In late gestation, the feed should also support foal development and prepare the mare for lactation.

How much grain should a broodmare eat per day?

How much grain a horse should eat each day depends on bodyweight, forage quality, pregnancy stage, and body condition. For broodmares, grain should only fill the gap between what forage provides and what the mare needs. A horse feeding chart can help, but adjust based on the mare's bodyweight and how well she maintains condition.

Is sweet feed beneficial for broodmares?

Sweet feed for horses can be useful if the mare needs better palatability, but it is not always the ideal choice for broodmare feeding. Some sweet feeds are lesser in digestibility or not as balanced as a complete feed. Check the feed tag thoroughly and compare it with the mare's needs for pregnancy and lactation before deciding.

What horse feed helps a thin broodmare gain weight safely?

The best horse feed for weight gain in a thin broodmare is usually a conditioned feed or complete feed paired with quality forage. Adding a fat supplement and digestible fiber can increase calorie intake without relying on too much grain. Safe weight gain should be slow and based on regular condition checks.

How do I compare horse feed cost before choosing a brand?

Use a horse feed cost calculator or compare the cost per day, not just the bag price. Look at how much the mare actually needs, how concentrated the feed is, and whether it fits a long-term feeding budget. A more nutrient-dense feed may cost more per bag but less per day if it requires a smaller feeding rate.