

Picking the right **horse feed** in the warmer months is less about adding energy and mainly about supporting **hydration, digestive health**, and a steady supply of usable nutrients. With more **grazing**, higher temperatures, and often a change in **workload, summer horse feeding** needs a sensible approach. The best results usually come from a **forage first** plan, measured use of **hard feed**, and close attention to **body condition score**.

Summer feeding should help a horse stay cool, maintain **bodyweight**, and keep **gut health** stable. That means looking at what the horse eats, how much exercise it does, how much **pasture** it has, and whether the diet is balanced for **nutrient requirements**. In many cases, the best answer is not more feed, but the right type of feed in the right amount.

What varies in a horse's diet in summer?

Summer changes a horse's diet in several important ways. The main difference is usually access to **grazing** and fresh **pasture**, which can boost the amount of fibre, water, and sugar in the diet. That influences **hydration**, energy intake, and digestive function. A horse on regular **pasture turnout** may need less bucket feed than it does in winter, but it still needs a properly balanced feed plan.

Hot weather also increases the risk of **heat stress**. Horses may lose more fluid through sweat, drink less than expected, or lose **electrolytes**. This makes hydration balance a key part of summer horse feeding. A horse may need more access to clean water, salt, and electrolytes, especially if it is in work. If appetite drops in the heat, highly palatable feed can help maintain intake without overloading the digestive system.

Another change is the quality of forage. Summer grass can be rich in **sugar**, which may suit some horses but not others. Horses prone to weight gain, laminitis, or metabolic issues may need tighter control of grazing and a diet that stays **low sugar** and **low starch**. On the other hand, hard-working horses may need enough digestible energy to support performance without excessive starch.

The main goal is to adjust feeding to the season, not to feed the same ration all year. Summer feeding should be guided by condition, workload, and the amount of roughage already coming from the field or paddock.

What kinds of horse feed are best during hot weather?

The most suitable **types of horse feed** for hot weather are usually those that support digestion, keep the horse eating steadily, and prevent sharp energy surges. That usually means a ration built around **forage** with a well-selected bucket feed if needed. The right feeds depend on the horse's work, condition, and forage access.

Roughage remains the backbone of the diet. Good-quality **dried grass** or **haylage** can be used if grazing is not enough or if grass is sparse. For horses that maintain condition easily, forage may be enough on its own. For horses needing additional support, the next step is often a **complete horse feed** or a **balancer feed**, depending on how much extra energy is needed.

A **complete horse feed** can be useful because it is formulated to supply fibre, vitamins, and minerals in one feed. A lot of them are made to be **low starch** and **low sugar**, making them appropriate for summer when digestive comfort is important. This can be a practical option for horses that need a straightforward diet and consistent nutrient intake.

For horses that need only vitamins, minerals, and amino acids to complement grazing and forage, a balancer may be better than a full hard feed ration. That helps reduce unnecessary calories while still meeting nutrient

requirements. Horses in harder work may need a feed with more digestible fibre and some starch, but the aim should still be to keep the diet as consistent and settled as possible.

When comparing feed options, check for:

- Rich in digestible fibre content
- Moderate or low starch levels
- Controlled sugar content
- Strong vitamin and mineral coverage
- Clear guidance on feeding rate by bodyweight and workload

During summer, the best horse feed is usually one that supports energy without excess heat-producing starch. That does not mean starch must always be avoided, but it needs careful management and tailored to exercise levels.

Should you decrease hard feed in summer?

In many cases, yes. **Hard feed** often may need cutting back in summer because pasture and grazing can supply more of the diet already. If a horse is on good grass, the amount of bucket feed may be higher than necessary. Cutting back on **feed quantity** can help prevent too much weight gain and limit digestive strain.

That said, the best approach depends on **workload**. A horse in light work may need minimal hard feed, while a competition horse, a poor doer, or a horse with a demanding schedule may still need extra energy. The principle is to feed according to output, not season alone. Summer simply alters what the horse is already getting from forage and pasture.

If reducing hard feed, do it step by step. Sudden changes can affect the hindgut and disturb appetite. Keep an eye on energy levels, coat condition, and body condition score. If the horse begins to drop weight, becomes dull, or struggles to recover after exercise, the ration may need adjusting.

Some horses do better when the hard feed is replaced with more forage-based calories rather than a dense cereal mix. This supports digestive health and can decrease the risk of sharp energy peaks. For many owners, the best summer strategy is to cut back on bucket feed where possible, but keep the ration well balanced and appropriate for the horse's actual workload.

How horse feeding rules change in summer

Horse feeding rules do not go away in summer; they just become more important. The classic **10 rules of feeding horses** still apply, but summer conditions make some of them especially relevant. The most important **horse feeding advice** is to put first forage, water, consistency, and careful observation.

- Feed **forage first** and base the diet around roughage.
- Offer clean water at all times to support hydration.
- Choose feed that matches workload and body condition.
- Make ration changes gradually.
- Keep feeding times as consistent as possible.
- Avoid overfeeding energy to horses that are already getting rich pasture.
- Balance minerals and vitamins even when bucket feed is reduced.
- Support electrolytes if the horse sweats heavily.

- Monitor bodyweight and body condition score regularly.
- Watch for signs of digestive upset, heat stress, or reduced appetite.

These rules matter because summer can conceal problems. A horse may look fine on the surface, yet still have a poor hydration balance or be getting too much sugar from grass. Feeding choices should support stable **gut health** and steady energy release.

A sensible summer plan is to review the whole diet, not just the bucket. Grazing, forage, hard feed, supplements, and exercise all interact. Good horse feeding rules are about matching the ration to the horse's real needs.

How to read a horse feeding chart

A **horse feeding chart** is useful because it helps owners compare feed amounts against bodyweight, work level, and condition. It is not a fixed answer for every horse, but it provides a starting point for building a **daily ration**. A chart also helps you see when a horse is getting too little forage or too much hard feed.

One of the most useful measures is **body condition score**. This tells you whether the horse is underweight, ideal, or carrying excess cover. In summer, a horse may maintain condition on pasture alone, while another loses weight because of work or heat. A feeding chart helps you react in a structured way instead of guessing.

To apply a chart well:

- Estimate the horse's **bodyweight** correctly.
- Check body condition score rather than relying on appearance alone.
- Look at how much forage and pasture the horse already has.
- Match bucket feed to the horse's workload.
- Adjust the daily ration gradually if condition changes.

A chart is most useful when combined with practical observation. If the horse is losing topline, appearing flat, or not recovering well after exercise, the chart may need adjusting. If weight is creeping up, reduce energy intake and review grazing access. The chart is a reference, not a replacement for judgment.

How much horse feed should a horse get in summer?

There is no single answer to how much **horse feed** a horse should get in summer, because the right amount is influenced by bodyweight, workload, forage intake, and pasture quality. A **horse feed calculator uk** can be a handy guide as a starting point, but it should always be adjusted to the horse in front of you. Summer diets often need less hard feed and more emphasis on roughage.

The key question is not just the amount of bucket feed to give, but the amount of total forage the horse is eating. **Forage intake** from grass, hay, and haylage may already cover a large part of the horse's energy needs. If the horse is on lush pasture, additional feed may need to be minimal. If the horse has restricted grazing, then forage and bucket feed <http://business.thepilotnews.com/thepilotnews/markets/article/abnewswire-2026-7-24-with-half-of-britains-horses-overweight-bifid-launches-grain-free-low-sugar-feed-for-the-nations-good-doers/> each matter more.

A useful **horse feeding chart** often is built on roughage as **overweight horse feed** the base and then includes feed or ration balancer according to workload. Horses in low work may only need a balancer and hay. Horses in intermediate to heavy work may need a more substantial feed, but still not so much starch that it risks digestive problems.

As a practical rule, see that the ration promotes condition, not just calories. If a horse is keeping a healthy body condition score, has got good energy, and is eating well, the amount is probably near the correct amount. If you are unsure, use a calculator as a guide, then evaluate the diet weekly.

What should beginners know about summer horse feeding?

For **horse feed for beginners**, the simplest advice is to keep the diet consistent, forage-led, and simple to track. Summer can make feeding seem simpler because horses may get more grass, but it can also make it trickier to judge what the horse really needs. Good **horse feed advice uk** often starts with consistency and observation rather than fancy products.

A strong **feeding routine** matters. Feed at the same times each day where possible, provide constant access to water, and keep forage available so the horse does not have big gaps without fibre. Beginners should learn to assess body condition score and watch for changes in appetite, droppings, hydration, and behaviour.

It is also important to know that not every horse needs a large hard feed. Some horses do best with hay, grazing, and a balancer. Others need more support because of work, age, or poor condition. Beginners should avoid copying another horse's ration without checking whether the workload and pasture access are really the same.

If you are new to summer feeding, start by asking three questions: how much grazing does the horse have, how much work is it doing, and is the horse maintaining bodyweight? Those answers usually point to the right type and amount of feed.

Which horse feed brands and companies are commonly chosen?

There are plenty of **horse feed companies** on the market, and owners often choose products based on forage backing, condition management, or performance needs. Some brands are commonly recognised, including **spillers horse feed**, which is often considered by owners looking for a wide selection of feed types and balancers.

Brand choice should begin with the **feed labels**. Labels tell you the source of energy, starch and sugar levels, fibre content, and whether the product is a full **complete horse feed** or a complementary feed. This is especially important in summer, when a feed that looks appropriate initially may be too rich for a horse already getting plenty of pasture.

When comparing brands, assess:

- Digestible fibre levels
- Starch, sugar, and carbohydrate levels matter
- Whether the feed is complete or needs forage alongside it
- Suitability for light, moderate, or hard work
- Mineral and vitamin coverage in the ration

Different horse feed companies may offer similar products, but the details matter. A good label helps you match the feed to the horse's body condition score, workload, and forage access. In summer, the best brand is the one that fits the ration, not necessarily the one with the biggest name.

How much does horse feed cost in summer?

Horse feed cost varies depending on feed type, quality, and how much the horse needs. If you are asking **how much does horse feed cost** in summer, the answer depends on whether the horse is mainly on forage and grazing or needs a full bucket feed. In many cases, summer can reduce feed bills if pasture provides a large share of the diet.

A sensible **budget** should include not just bucket feed, but also hay, haylage, balancers, electrolytes, and supplements where needed. Horses that sweat heavily may need extra support for hydration and electrolytes, and that should be counted as part of the total feeding cost. A horse on limited grazing may still need significant forage, so summer does not always mean lower costs.

To manage cost well:

- Utilise forage efficiently and avoid waste
- Feed only what the horse needs for its workload
- Choose a balancer if full hard feed is unnecessary
- Check whether the horse is overfed on rich pasture
- Compare the cost per day, not just the bag price

The lowest-cost option is not always the best if it fails to support digestive health or condition. The best budget decision is usually the one that keeps the horse healthy, avoids waste, and matches the summer ration to actual need.

Can you make a horse feed mix recipe at home?

Yes, you can make a **horse feed mix recipe** at home, but it must be done carefully to maintain **ration balance**. A home mix can be useful for owners who want to control ingredients, but it is easy to get the balance wrong if the diet lacks vitamins, minerals, or amino acids. That is why a **balancer** is often the safest way to support a home-made ration.

If preparing a ration, keep the base basic and forage-led. The objective should be a low-risk gentle diet rather than a overly detailed recipe. Many horses do well with water-soaked or compressed fibre sources, a balancer, and a small amount of weight-gain feed if needed. This helps support energy without raising starch too high.

Key points for a home mix:

- Keep starch low unless the horse truly needs it
- Use ingredients that support digestible fibre
- Include a balancer for micronutrient coverage
- Check the feed against the horse's workload and bodyweight
- Review body condition score regularly

Home mixing can be effective, but the diet must still meet nutrient requirements. If you are unsure, choose a proven commercial feed or ask for help adjusting the ration. A recipe is only useful if it supports health consistently over time.

When should you ask for horse feed advice?

You should ask for **horse feed advice uk** whenever the horse's state, effort, or digestion changes and the cause is not obvious. A **vet** should be involved if there are signs of illness, weight loss, poor appetite, loose droppings,

colic risk, or suspected metabolic problems. A qualified **nutritionist** is helpful when you need a ration designed around bodyweight, workload, grazing access, and condition goals.

This matters most if:

- The horse is losing or gaining weight quickly
- There are signs of heat stress or poor hydration balance
- Grazing changes suddenly
- You are unsure whether the horse needs more forage, less hard feed, or a different type of feed
- The horse has special needs such as laminitis risk, poor teeth, or competition demands

Good horse feed advice is hands-on and specific. It should help you choose the right feed quantity, maintain digestive health, and make feeding easier to manage. If you are ever unsure, professional input is worth it, especially during summer when pasture and heat can alter the ration quickly.

FAQs about feeding horses in summer

Which is the best horse feed for summer?

The ideal **horse feed** for summer is usually forage-led and matched to the horse's workload and condition score. For most horses, that means excellent hay, haylage, or grazing, plus a reduced starch balancer or a **complete horse feed** if additional nutrients are needed. The best option is the one that supports hydration, digestive health, and steady energy without overloading the horse on sugar or starch.

Should horses eat less hard feed in hot weather?

In many cases, yes, because summer grazing and pasture can already provide plenty of energy and fibre. Reducing **hard feed** may help reduce the risk of weight gain and support gut comfort. However, the final amount depends on **workload**, body condition, and how much forage the horse is already eating. Some horses still need a substantial bucket feed, especially if they are in regular work.

What amount of forage should a horse have in summer?

Forage should remain the foundation of the diet, whether it comes from grass, hay, or haylage. The exact amount depends on bodyweight, pasture quality, and the rest of the ration, but summer feeding should always protect **forage intake**. If grazing is limited or the horse is losing condition, add hay or haylage to keep fibre intake stable.

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Can a complete horse feed appropriate for summer feeding?

Yes, a **complete horse feed** can be suitable in summer, especially if it is designed to be reduced starch and low-sugar. It is often useful when you want a easy ration that provides fibre, vitamins, and minerals in one product. It can work well alongside forage and grazing, provided the amount is adjusted to the horse's workload and body condition.

What is the best way to know if my horse needs a feed calculator or feeding chart?

If you are unsure how much to feed, a **horse feed calculator uk** or **horse feeding chart** is a good starting point. These tools help you estimate a suitable daily ration based on bodyweight, workload, and condition. They are especially useful if the horse is gaining or dropping weight, getting more or less grazing, or changing work level. Use them as guides, then check the horse's body condition score and adjust gradually.