

Picking the right **horse feed** in hot weather 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 balanced approach. The best results usually come from a **forage first** plan, careful use of **hard feed**, and close attention to **body condition score**.

Summer diets 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 less feed overall, 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 biggest difference is usually access to **grazing** and fresh **pasture**, which can raise the amount of fibre, water, and sugar in the diet. That impacts **hydration**, energy intake, and digestive function. A horse on regular **pasture turnout** may need a smaller bucket ration than it does in winter, but it still needs a balanced diet.

Hot weather also raises the risk of **heat stress**. Horses may sweat more, drink less than expected, or lose **electrolytes**. This makes hydration balance a central 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, [horse feed online shop](#) 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 best **types of horse feed** for high temperatures are usually those that support digestion, help the horse eat consistently, and limit abrupt bursts of energy. That usually means a ration built around **forage** with a carefully chosen bucket feed if needed. The best choices depend on the horse's work, condition, and forage access.

Forage feed remains the foundation of the feeding plan. Good-quality **dried grass** or **baled forage** can be used if pasture intake is not enough or if grass is sparse. For horses that maintain weight easily, forage may be enough on its own. For horses needing extra support, the next step is often a **complete horse feed** or a **ration balancer**, depending on how much extra calories is needed.

A **complete horse feed** can be beneficial because it is formulated to deliver fibre, vitamins, and minerals in one option. Many are made to be **low starch** and **low sugar**, making them appropriate for summer when digestive comfort counts. This can be a convenient option for horses that need a simple diet and consistent nutrient intake.

For horses that need only vitamins, minerals, and amino acids to supplement 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 greater 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, look for:

- Rich in digestible fibre content
- Medium or low starch levels
- Controlled sugar content
- Good vitamin and mineral coverage
- Simple guidance on feeding rate by bodyweight and workload

In the summer, the ideal horse feed is typically one that provides energy without excess heat-producing starch. That does not mean starch must always be avoided, but it needs careful management and matched to exercise demands.

Should you decrease hard feed in summer?

In most situations, 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 ample grass, the amount of bucket feed may be exceed what it needs. Reducing **feed quantity** can help prevent unwanted weight gain and limit digestive strain.

That said, the correct answer depends on **workload**. A horse in light work may need little or no hard feed, while a competition horse, a poor doer, or a horse with a demanding schedule may still need additional 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 slowly. Sudden changes can affect the hindgut and upset 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 tweaking.

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 lower the risk of sharp energy peaks. For many owners, the best summer strategy is to decrease bucket feed where possible, but keep the ration balanced and appropriate for the horse's actual workload.

How horse feeding rules change in summer

Horse feeding rules do not disappear in summer; they simply 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.

- Give **forage first** and build the diet around roughage.
- Provide clean water at all times to support hydration.
- Select feed that matches workload and body condition.
- Make ration changes gradually.
- Set 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 hide problems. A horse may look bright 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 consistent 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 lets owners weigh up feed amounts against bodyweight, work level, and condition. It is not a fixed answer for every horse, but it gives a place to begin for building a **daily ration**. A chart also helps you see when a horse is getting too little forage or excessive hard feed.

One of the most useful measures is **body condition score**. This tells you whether the horse is underweight, ideal, or carrying too much 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 use a chart well:

- Estimate the horse's **bodyweight** carefully.
- 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 slowly if condition changes.

A chart is most reliable when combined with regular 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 tool, 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 useful as a starting point, but it should always be tailored to the horse in front of you. Summer diets often need less concentrate feed and more emphasis on roughage.

The main question is not just the amount of bucket feed to give, but how much total forage the horse is eating. **Forage intake** from pasture, hay, and haylage may already cover a large part of the horse's energy needs. If the horse is on abundant pasture, additional feed may need to be very small. If the horse has restricted grazing, then forage and bucket feed both matter more.

A helpful **horse feeding chart** usually starts with roughage as the core and then includes concentrate or balancer according to exercise level. Horses in easy work may only need a ration balancer and roughage. Horses in intermediate to heavy work may need a more robust feed, but still not so much starch that it risks digestive issues.

As a practical rule, make sure the ration maintains condition, not just calories. If a horse is keeping a healthy body condition score, has good energy, and is eating well, the amount is probably close to right. If you are uncertain, use a calculator as a guide, then review the diet weekly.

What should beginners know about summer horse feeding?

For **horse feed for beginners**, the most practical advice is to keep the diet steady, forage-led, and easy to monitor. Summer can make feeding seem more manageable 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, ensure water is always on offer, and keep forage available so the horse does not have long gaps without fibre. Beginners should learn to assess body condition 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 actually 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 most suitable 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 support, condition management, or performance needs. Some brands are well known, 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 suitable at first glance may be too rich for a horse already getting plenty of pasture.

When comparing brands, compare:

- Digestible fibre
- Levels of starch and sugar are important
- Whether the feed is complete or needs forage alongside it
- Suitability for light, moderate, or hard work
- Vitamin and mineral coverage in the feed

Different horse feed companies may sell 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 changes 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 cut 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 making a blend, keep the base basic and forage-focused. The objective should be a safer easily digested diet rather than a overly detailed recipe. Many horses do well with soaked or compressed fibre sources, a feed balancer, and a small amount of conditioning feed if needed. This helps support energy without raising starch too high.

Main points for a home mix:

- Keep starch modest unless the horse truly requires it
- Use ingredients that promote digestible fibre
- Include a balancer for micronutrient coverage
- Check the feed against the horse's exercise load and bodyweight
- Review body condition score regularly

Home mixing can work, but the diet must still fulfil nutrient requirements. If you are unsure, use a proven commercial feed or ask for help balancing 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 condition, 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.

Advice is especially important if:

- The horse is shedding 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 practical and specific. It should help you pick the right feed quantity, promote 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.

Common questions about nutrition for horses in summer

Which is the best horse feed for summer?

The ideal **horse feed** for summer is usually based on forage and suited to the horse's activity level and body state. For many horses, that means high-quality hay, haylage, or grazing, plus a low-starch balancer or a **complete horse feed** if extra 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.

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Do horses need less hard feed in hot weather?

Often 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 meaningful 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.

Is a complete horse feed a good option for summer feeding?

Yes, a **complete horse feed** can be suitable in summer, especially if it is designed to be low starch and low-sugar. It is often useful when you want a simple 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 **overweight horse feed** unsure how much to feed, a **horse feed calculator uk** or **horse feeding chart** is a useful first step. These tools help you estimate a suitable daily ration based on bodyweight, workload, and condition. They are especially useful if the horse is increasing 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.