

Nutrition Counseling: Justin Sobota; MS, MSM, DVM

South Mountain Equine LLC offers counseling in dietary selection and feeding practices for horses during various life stages such as growth, gestation and performance. This includes "special considerations" of draft, light breed, miniature and senior horses.

We also offer consultation in dietary selection and feeding practices for horses with specific disease conditions in which nutritional intervention plays a role in disease management. Such diseases include:

- Insulin resistance, Cushing Syndrome, Peripheral Cushing, Metabolic Syndrome
- Founder, Laminitis
- Polysaccharide storage myopathy
- Dietary hypersensitivities
- Osteoarthritis
- Dental health
- Hyperkalemic periodic paralysis
- Renal (kidney) disease
- Urolithiasis (kidney/bladder stones)
- Gastrointestinal disease
- Critical Care (utilization of feeding tubes and intravenous nutrition)
- Neoplasia (tumors and cancers)

South Mountain Equine LLC can also assist you in structuring a proper weight management program for your horse.

If you have an appointment for a nutrition consultation, please click the link below and fill out the form before coming to your session.

South Mountain Equine Diet History Form

Current body weight (wt. tape) _____

Usual body weight (wt. tape) _____

Do you consider your horse:

Overweight _____

Underweight _____

Ideal _____

Please list below the brand or product names (if applicable) and amounts of **ALL** types of hay, hay, feeds, and treats your horse is currently eating. *This description should provide enough detail that we could go to the store and purchase the feed. Please include **EVERYTHING** your horse eats.*

Two examples are given in italics.

Brand & Name, Feed Form, Amount Fed Per Meal, Number of Feedings, & Fed Since
EXAMPLES:

Purina Strategy, pellets, 4 pounds twice a day, May 20008

Timothy grass hay 4 pounds three times a week June 2008

Please describe horse's activity level (i.e. type, duration & frequency):

Do you have other horses? Yes No If so, please list (species, age):

Is your horse fed in the presence of other animals? Yes No

If yes, please describe:

Who typically feeds your horse? _____

How do you store your horse's feed? _____

Do you use feed to administer medication? If yes please describe type of feed and amount _____

Please list other diets your horse has received in the past, indicating the approximate time period when they were fed.

An example is given in italics.

Brand & Name, Feed Form, Amount Fed Per Meal, Number of Feedings, & Reason Ended

EXAMPLE:

Purina Strategy, pellets, 4 pounds twice a day, June 2008 to March January 2009, Change in Hay source.

Please list the name of each additional supplement your horse receives, indicate how much and how often your horse receives it (i.e. herbal product, fatty acid, vitamin or mineral supplement):

Please list your horse's current and past medical problems, if any, and whether they have been resolved or not.

Please list all the medications your horse is currently receiving and any administered over the past three months (indicate medications that are current):

Please check the box, and indicate frequency, if the following problems have been experienced by your horse prior to today's visit:

Recent involuntary or unintended weight gain **OR** weight loss

How many pounds? Over what time period:

Loose Manure/Diarrhea times/day times/week

Have you observed changes in any of the following:

Urination **OR** Drinking What was the specific change?

Since when?

Manure Production and what was the specific change?

Since when?

Appetite and what was the specific change?

Since when?

Does your horse have? allergies **OR** difficulty chewing swallowing

If so, please describe:

Have you had a hay and/or pasture analysis? Would you be interested?

Have you had a water analysis? Would you be interested?

What state and county are your horses grazing?

From which state & county is your hay from?

Obesity: A Growing Concern for Our Horses

Losing weight is on the top of many resolution lists. Did you realize that your horse may need to shed a few pounds as well? A 2006 research study completed by the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Virginia Tech determined that 51% of adult horses are obese in northern Virginia. The obesity is primarily being caused by the quality of pasture and hay and the limited amount of exercise that these horses are being provided. Being overweight or obese is now the most frequent form of malnutrition seen at Woodside Equine Clinic.

Being a bit hefty is more than a cosmetic issue for our horses. As with people, carrying even just a bit of excessive weight can have serious consequences. Animals above a lean ideal body weight have increased risk of many medical conditions including:

Insulin resistance (glucose intolerance) – similar to type II diabetes in people, hyperinsulinemia, decreased exercise tolerance, increased stress on joints and soft tissue support structures, accelerated arthritic conditions (osteoarthritis), increased body tissue (BMI) & alterations in blood flow, decreased chest wall motion while breathing (decreased oxygen), difficulty in thermoregulation (bigger concern in summer competitions), cardiovascular changes which increases heart rate and respiratory rate which increases blood lactate which can increase chance of tying up or exertional myopathy, hepatic lipidosis (fatty liver which decreases organ function), increase fat content which increases chance of fatty tumors (lipoma growth which grow in the omentum and can strangulate intestine which is a cause of colic), decreases immune system (prone to disease), problem pregnancies (increased duration of pregnancy, decreased milk production, increased placental weight, difficulty rebreeding), and an increase in post-feeding insulin levels which can possibly contribute to osteochondritis dissecans (OCD) OR merely the increase in body mass can contribute to OCD. Increased anesthesia risk, life longevity?

But, how can you tell if your horse is overweight? Body weight is somewhat helpful especially if you know what your horse has weighed in the past...look for changes since those pounds can creep up over time. Ask your veterinarian to show you how to do a body condition score. This simple “score” rates your pet on a scale from 1-9 with 1 being too thin, 5 being ideal, and 6 and above being overweight. A horse with an “ideal score” will have ribs that can be easily felt.

If your horse is overweight, there are many things you can do to help him get back into shape. Speaking with your veterinarian is the first place to start. For some horses, feeding a diet formulated for weight loss and carefully selecting lower calorie treats can help. Increasing exercise as appropriate for your horse may be helpful. The Woodside Equine Clinic Nutrition Service also offers a comprehensive six month weight loss program which includes monthly weigh-ins and consultation to help you and your horse on the road to a healthier life. You can schedule an initial weight loss consultation by calling the clinic for an appointment with the nutrition service.

Fee Structure:

Basic Nutrition Counseling	(1 appt):	\$150.00
Advanced Nutrition Counseling	(4 appt):	\$400.00

Both the Basic and Advanced sessions include a hay analysis and ration balancing. Additional computerized ration balancing is based on number of horses per farm.

(2-5 horses: \$50.00), (5-10 horses: \$40.00), (>10 horses: \$30.00).

They noted that obese humans with insulin resistance have abnormal activity of 11 B-hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase-1 (11B-hsd1) which is an enzyme that activates cortisol. This enzyme is also believed to be abnormal in horses with laminitis.