



Functional foods for top performing horses

Performance horses have a huge demand for nutrients, to supply energy to the muscles. This fact is fully appreciated by owners and riders who generally use the best quality of feeds available. However even the best quality and most expensive feeds have limitations due to the effectiveness of the digestive tract. The absorption of all nutrients is dependant on a healthy gut. The colon and the resident microflora (the good bacteria!) have an essential role in the extraction and assimilation of nutrients to cover the daily and sporting needs but most importantly to ensure the health of the athlete, whether human or equine!

The main bugs in the large intestine are lactobacilli, bifidobacteria and bacteroides (commonly seen on pots of yoghurts and new generation functional food supplements). An imbalance in the gut of these bugs may arise from many causes but most commonly from the stress of training sessions, hard work and significant journeys. Common drug treatments (antibiotics, anti-inflammatories and analgesics) can exacerbate these problems. Any deviation in bacterial fermentation in the colon can develop liver weakness, drop in muscle tone and a decrease in performance and fitness.

A nutritional strategy to neutralise these risks in human athletes has been developed, and is now available for top performing horses. It is based on the use of specialised sugars called Fructo-Oligosaccharides (FOS). Often termed functional foods these are a "super food" for bugs to encourage development of healthy intestinal flora. FOS are selectively favoured by beneficial bacteria which gives these good bacteria a competitive advantage over pathogenic bacteria and strengthens the stability of the essential flora.

As specialists in animal nutrition Norvite have recognised the benefits of adding FOS to a well balanced diet. The range of mineral and trace element supplements balanced for local conditions has been expanded with the introduction of a Digestive Enhancer. Norvite Digestive Enhancer not only contains a proven source of FOS but also a live yeast. This blend of pre- and pro- biotics is an aid to digestive health, motility and function and encourages the proliferation of gut microflora.

The optimisation of digestion as a result of feeding Norvite Digestive Enhancer allows the ability of the performance horse to be fully expressed. A top performing horse depends on a top performing digestive tract.

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