

If you are looking for **horse feed** for a horse with ulcers, the best option is generally one that protects the stomach, keeps **gastric acid** irritation low, and delivers steady energy without overloading the gut. Horses with **equine gastric ulcers** often do better on an **ulcer-friendly feed** that is based on **forage**, contains plenty of **high fibre feed**, and is low in **starch** and **sugar**.

The right feeding plan is not just about one bag of feed. It is about the whole **forage-first diet**, the timing of meals, the amount of roughage, and how the feed aids **gut health**. In many cases, the best results come from combining good-quality **hay** or **haylage** with a sensible concentrate, rather than relying on a traditional cereal-based mix.

What makes a horse feed well-suited for ulcers?

A well-suited **horse feed** for ulcer-affected horses is one that supports the **stomach lining**, helps reduce spikes in **acid production**, and fits the horse's **nutritional requirements** without becoming too rich. The main aim is to keep the digestive system calm and nourished for as much of the day as possible.

That is why a **low starch feed** is usually favored. High levels of starch can move into the hindgut undigested, which may upset digestion and lower overall comfort. A **high fibre feed** is often better because fibre encourages chewing, saliva production, and a natural **buffering effect** in the stomach.

For ulcer-sensitive horses, the best feeds tend to be:

- High in fibre and made from roughage
- Very low in starch and low in added sugar
- Simple to digest with good **fibre digestibility**
- Well-suited for **small frequent meals**
- Helpful for maintaining **condition score** without excess cereal

Palatability counts too. A feed that the horse will consume reliably is more useful than a technically ideal one that is left in the bucket. For ulcer management, consistency, **meal timing**, and a steady daily intake are just as important as ingredients.

What kinds of horse feed are most worth avoiding?

Many **types of horse feed** may be less suitable for horses with ulcers because they are high in **starch**, high in **sugar**, or built around **cereal feed** ingredients. These feeds can increase the risk of digestive upset and may not support steady, calm energy.

Feeds best limited or avoided usually include traditional racing-style mixes, high-cereal competition rations, and sweetened feeds with a lot of molasses. They can be calorie-dense, but that calorie density often comes from ingredients that are not ideal for a sensitive stomach.

It is not that every cereal ingredient is automatically bad, but ulcer-prone horses generally do better when the ration is not centred on cereals. If a feed label shows multiple cereal components near the top of the ingredient list, it may be less suitable than a fibre-based alternative.

Look out for:

- High starch levels

- Heavy molassed products
- Oversized single meals
- Feeds designed mainly for rapid energy
- Products with minimal fibre or roughage

For many horses, the safest approach is to reduce dependence on cereal feed and build the ration around forage and fibre sources instead.

Ideal feed choices for horses affected by ulcers

The best ration options for horses with ulcers are usually those which blend digestibility, steady energy, and good fibre support. This is why products such as **complete horse feed**, **high fibre cubes**, **beet pulp**, and **forage-based feed** can be beneficial.

A **complete horse feed** may work well for some horses because it can supply fibre, energy, and added **vitamins and minerals** in one ration. Even so, the feed still needs to be checked carefully for starch and sugar levels. Every complete feed is automatically ulcer-friendly.

High fibre cubes are often a strong choice because they encourage chewing and can provide **slow-release energy** without the sharp rise associated with cereal-heavy rations. They are usually easy to mix with soaked fibre feeds or balancers.

Beet pulp is another useful option. It is highly palatable, helps increase fibre in the diet, and can be a good way to add calories without relying on starch. When fed correctly, it can fit very well into a digestive support programme.

A **forage-based feed** keeps the ration closer to the horse's natural eating pattern. This may include chopped fibre, alfalfa-based products, soaked fibre, and balancers designed to complement forage rather than replace it.

In reality, many horses with ulcers do well on a combination of:

- High-quality hay or haylage
- A fibre-rich bucket feed
- Beet pulp for extra condition or energy
- A balancer or complete feed where needed

Feeding a horse with a horse with ulcers: key feeding rules

The most effective **horse feeding rules** for ulcer-affected horses are centered on guarding the stomach from emptiness and avoiding large, stressful meals. If you follow the basic **10 rules of feeding horses** with ulcers in mind, you can achieve a noticeable difference to comfort and digestion.

The most important principle is to avoid long gaps without roughage. Horses normally produce **gastric acid** throughout the day, so feeding patterns should work to keep the stomach occupied.

Key rules include:

- Make forage the foundation of the ration
- Use **small frequent meals** in place of large feeds
- Provide **continuous forage** if practical
- Limit starch and added sugar

- Keep meal times as steady as you can
- Introduce changes slowly
- Make sure plenty of water and salt are available
- Match feed to exercise and workload

These rules promote the stomach lining and help reduce the chance of the stomach being empty for too long. They also support hydration, which is important for digestive function and overall comfort.

Use a horse feeding chart to plan meals

A **horse feeding chart** is helpful because it helps you organise **bodyweight**, **forage intake**, and **meal frequency** in one practical plan. It can help you see whether the horse is getting enough roughage before you add concentrates.

When using a chart, start by estimating bodyweight and then working out daily forage needs. The horse's forage intake should usually be the priority, with bucket feed added only to fill nutritional gaps or provide extra calories. A well-planned chart also makes it easier to spot long fasting periods between meals.

If the horse is on limited turnout or controlled grazing, the chart becomes even more important. It can help you schedule hay nets, soaked fibre feeds, and concentrate meals to keep intake steady across the day.

How much horse feed should you give?

No single ideal amount of **horse feed** for every ulcer-prone horse. The proper amount depends on **workload**, **body condition score**, the horse's size, forage quality, and whether the feed is a complete ration or a supplement.

A sensible way to view this is to feed to condition, not just to appetite. If the horse is losing weight, the ration may need more digestible fibre or a higher calorie density. If the horse is carrying too much condition, you may need to reduce the concentrate and improve the forage strategy.

A **horse feed calculator uk** can be a good starting point, but it should never replace observation. These tools can estimate daily intake, yet they cannot fully assess the horse's temperament, appetite, training demands, or ulcer history. That is why **horse feed advice uk** from an experienced professional can be so valuable.

Use the following checks when deciding quantity:

- Latest **body condition score**
- Level and quality of forage
- True **workload**
- Recent past weight changes
- How well the horse is tolerating the current ration

If ulcers are suspected, avoid sudden feed changes. Increase feed gradually, monitor droppings and appetite, and review the plan if the horse becomes stressed, sluggish, or difficult to keep in condition.

Should you choose a fully balanced horse feed?

A **complete horse feed** can be an effective option for horses with ulcers, but only if it works as part of a careful **balanced ration**. The advantage is that some complete feeds offer bulk, calories, **vitamins and minerals**, and digestive support in one product.

However, not all complete feeds are equal. Some are designed for performance and may contain more starch than an ulcer-prone horse needs. Others are based on roughage and oil and are considerably more suitable.

Before choosing a complete feed, look at:

- Whether the horse already gets adequate quality forage
- Whether the product is relatively low in starch
- Whether it provides the right vitamins and minerals
- Whether the horse needs extra calories or only digestive support
- Whether a separate balancer would be better

Forage analysis can help you inform this decision. If you know the nutrient profile of the hay or haylage, you can avoid duplicating nutrients or leaving gaps in the diet. For some horses, a complete feed works well because it complements forage efficiently. For others, a balancer and separate fibre sources are a better fit.

Horse feed brands, cost and product comparisons

When comparing **horse feed companies**, brand name matters less than the ingredient profile, feeding rate, and whether the product matches the horse's needs. Some horse owners compare **spillers horse feed** alongside other brands because they want a recognised name, but the label still needs close reading.

Horse feed cost should also be considered in terms of value, not just bag price. A cheaper bag may require more daily feeding, while a pricier feed might be more concentrated and cost less per day. What matters most is the real **price per day** based on the recommended feeding rate.

When reviewing feeds, ask:

- How much is needed per day?
- Is the feed a true fibre-based option?
- Will it suit a stomach-friendly feeding plan?
- Are you paying for ingredients the horse does not need?
- Will it work within the broader digestive plan?

How to review labels and ingredients

A good way to compare products is by reading the **feed label** carefully. Look at **digestible energy**, **fibre**, and **oil** levels first, then check starch and sugar. A good ulcer-prone ration often relies on fibre and oil for calories rather than cereal-based energy.

Digestible energy indicates how calorie-rich the feed is, while fibre helps support gut function and a slower, steadier release of energy. **Oil** is useful because it can increase calorie density without the same starch load as cereals. That makes it helpful for weight maintenance or performance support when used correctly.

You should also check the ingredient order. If cereals dominate the list, the feed may be less suitable than a product built around fibre, alfalfa, beet pulp, and oil. For ulcer-prone horses, the best label is often one that is simple, transparent, and clearly designed for digestive support.

Example horse feed mix formula for ulcer-affected horses

A basic **horse feed mix recipe** for an ulcer-prone horse should emphasize fiber, acceptance, and gentle energy. One useful approach is to combine **unmolassed beet pulp**, **alfalfa**, and **linseed** with a small amount of balancer or a low starch fibre feed.

For example, you could create a ration around:

- Soaked unmolassed beet pulp for fibre and moisture
- Cut alfalfa for chewing and buffering support
- Linseed for additional oil and condition support
- A suitable balancer to cover micronutrients

This kind of mix can work well because it supplies calorie intake without relying on heavy cereal content. The beet pulp and alfalfa help create a more forage-like texture, while linseed adds useful oil and may improve palatability.

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Be cautious not to overfeed any single ingredient. The aim is to create a steady, digestible ration that fits the horse's daily intake, exercise, and body condition. If you are unsure, review the mix with a nutrition professional before making it the main part of the diet.

Horse feed for beginners: what matters most

For **horse feed for beginners**, the biggest priority is to keep things simple: **forage-first**, regular, and appropriate for the horse's needs. You do not need the most complicated diet to support ulcer-prone horses. You need the right basics done well.

Start with these basics:

- Enough forage throughout the day
- A calm feeding routine with predictable meal timing
- Fresh water at all times
- A fibre-based bucket feed if extra nutrients are needed
- Attention to **gut health** and hydration

Beginners often focus too much on the feed bucket and not enough on roughage. But **roughage** is usually the foundation of ulcer management. A horse that is well supplied with hay or haylage is often much better supported than one eating only two large bucket feeds a day.

Hydration is important too. Good water intake supports digestion, allows fibre move through the gut, and adds to overall comfort. A forage-first, hydration-aware plan is usually the safest place to begin.

When to ask a vet or nutritionist

You may need to contact an **equine vet** if ulcer signs are continued, intense, or getting worse. In many cases, proper diagnosis is important because symptoms can overlap with other issues. An equine vet can assess whether the horse may have **EGUS** and advise on treatment and feeding alongside it.

A **nutritionist** can be especially useful if the horse needs weight gain, performance support, or a more complex ration. They can help you choose between a complete feed, a balancer, fibre feeds, or a custom approach based on forage analysis and the horse's workload.

Common **symptoms** that may justify further support include:

- Poor appetite or picky eating
- Condition loss or difficulty holding condition
- Irritable behaviour around feeding or riding
- Reduced performance
- Sensitivity when girthing or tacking up
- Changes in droppings or general demeanour

If you suspect ulcers, do not rely on feed changes alone to solve the problem. Feeding is a major part of digestive support, but diagnosis and treatment may still be needed. The most effective plan usually combines veterinary guidance, sensible equine nutrition, and a consistent forage-led routine.

FAQ

What horse feed is best for horses with ulcers?

The best **horse feed** for horses with ulcers is usually a **low starch feed** that is high in fibre, palatable, and designed to support gut health. Look for a **high fibre feed** based on forage, beet pulp, alfalfa, or fibre cubes, and avoid feeds that rely heavily on cereal ingredients.

Should horses with ulcers be fed a complete horse feed?

A **complete horse feed** [Additional info](#) can be suitable if it is low in starch and fits the horse's **balanced ration**. Some complete feeds provide good digestive support, but others **overweight horse feed** are too cereal-rich. Always compare the feed label and consider the horse's forage and overall nutritional requirements.

How often should I feed a horse with ulcers?

Provide **little and often meals** if you can and provide **forage at all times** over the day. It helps lessen empty-stomach time and supports the stomach lining. The ideal feeding pattern depends on turnout, work, and the horse's daily routine, but long gaps without forage should be avoided.

Is alfalfa good for horses with ulcers?

Yes — **alfalfa hay** can be a useful ingredient for horses prone to ulcers because it is fibre-rich and may help create a buffering effect in the stomach. It is commonly used in a forage-first feeding plan, particularly when paired with beet pulp or other easy-to-digest fibre sources.

What feeds should be avoided for a horse with ulcers?

In general, avoid feeds that are high in **starchy content**, containing lots of **added sugar**, or built mainly around **cereal-based feed**. They are less likely to suit horses with ulcers. Instead, select a feed that supports digestion, steady energy, and regular intake throughout the day.