

Careful feeding is essential to the health of broodmares and the newborn foal.

Improvements in nutrition for the mare should have started about half way through gestation, but lactation nutrition is equally important. During gestation, providing sufficient protein, minerals and vitamins for foal growth is the primary issue. During lactation, we are just as concerned about those nutrients, but we also now need to provide sufficient energy to replace calories lost in milk production. At peak lactation (between 2 and 3 months after foaling), the mare's energy requirement can be 180% above normal energy needs for a mare producing 30 to 35 pounds of milk per day.

For the foals, growth in the first year is dramatic. Within the first year, foals should reach 60% of mature weight, 90% of mature height, and 95% of bone growth. Key nutrients are protein, calcium, phosphorus Copper, Zinc, Manganese, and Vitamins A & D in proper balance. Protein has more effect on growth than any other nutrient but quality of protein (amino acids) is the key. Research indicates that lysine is the most important amino acid for foals. Horse feeds for both mares and foals should not only contain sufficient levels of lysine but also guarantee it on the tag.

We have a couple of great articles on growing horses on our website. Look for the section that says Feeding Mare and Growing Horses (<http://www.triplecrownfeed.com/feed-articles-horse-feed-reviews-horsefeedreviews/>).

Triple Crown has great feed choices for your broodmares and growing horses as well! High fiber horse feeds also have proven to be a big benefit in helping to reduce joint and limb problems by reducing insulin and growth hormone spikes. Triple Crown Growth (<http://www.triplecrownfeed.com/products/feeds/horse-growth-formula-horsegrowth>) is one of very few high fiber, beet pulp based horse feeds for both mares and foals. We also recommend our newer feed, Triple Crown Total Lifetime Care (<http://www.triplecrownfeed.com/products/feeds/equinehealth-horse-nutrition-totallifetimehorsenutrition>) which is a high fiber, high fat beet pulp based pelleted feed appropriate for horses of any age, from foals to senior horses.

Start your foals off right by starting in mid-gestation and feeding correctly through 2 years of age.