

Higher Quality Fixed Horse Feed Formulation May Contribute Significantly To Lower, Overall Equine Health Costs

Horse Feed: Understanding Big Picture Cost Distinctions Between Fixed Formulation and Least Cost Formulation Horse Feeds.

Ingredients:

Using inferior ingredients is another method to reduce costs. For example, peanut and rice hulls are prevalent fiber sources in lower cost diets. Peanut hulls are poorly digested and can pose a big problem with a mycotoxin called aflatoxin. Aflatoxin, considered carcinogenic, has been associated with liver disease and death. The FDA established an action level at only 20 parts per billion. Recently, a major feed company had to dispose of hundreds of tons of horse feed because of a FDA recall due to aflatoxin contamination. Much of that feed was a senior diet designed for horses that already have a reduced tolerance to digestive challenges. Furthermore, peanut hull specifications are not even listed in the National Research Council's *Nutrient Requirements for Horses*, and the calorie content is considered well below even poor hay due to an excessively high amount of lignin. A better ingredient choice would be a fiber source like beet pulp, which has as many calories as oats, but is low in lignin.

One product labeling issue being discussed is how to list digestible fiber on a feed tag. Whether a feed uses shredded beet pulp or peanut hulls, the crude fiber guarantee can be the same. Measurements related to the digestibility of the fiber are being considered. Rarely will you see peanut hulls on a feed tag; it will be listed as "processed fiber byproducts."

Disclaimers

One company, that had extraordinary expansion over the past few years with many "same as, but cheaper" products, has a disclaimer on the back of its feed tags. The disclaimer states that if there is a problem with the feed, the company is only liable to replace the value of the feed. It will not reimburse the owner for any other costs caused by the feed such as vet fees, loss of use, etc. So, the feed is "same as, but cheaper," but you better hope the feed doesn't cause any problems because the only compensation will be the cost of the feed.

Effectiveness

Because horses are not production livestock, there no real way to measure the effectiveness of feeding programs. Feed quality is measured in livestock by improved milk production, average daily gain or more eggs. We don't have the same parameters in the horse world, so making a "same as, but cheaper" feed claim is relatively simple, especially if you have good pasture and hay.

"Real" Cost

One of Triple Crown's goals is to make feeding horses easier and less expensive, not more expensive. Let's look at the estimated annual cost of feeding one horse Triple Crown, compared to using another feed that is \$3 a bag cheaper. Using a feeding rate of 5 lb. per day, it would only cost \$109.50 more per year, or about 22 Starbucks coffees, to feed Triple

Crown. One colic call to a vet or the addition of one supplement exceeds the added cost. If the improved digestibility of Triple Crown in conjunction with the prebiotics and probiotics allow you to feed one pound less per day, the cost of feeding Triple Crown compared to the other brand is the same even though they are less expensive by \$3.00/bag. We have had a number of horse owners tell us they have actually reduced their feed costs by paying more for a Triple Crown product.

Next time someone tells you a feed is the “same as, but cheaper,” ask some questions, or call or e-mail us for a consultation. Triple Crown feeds have set the standard; don’t settle for second best.

Visit: www.triplecrownfeed.com or call us at 800-451-9916 to learn more about our feeds or to receive feed recommendations.