

## How to Select the Best Equine Nutrition Strategy: Pellets vs. Textured Horse Feeds.

### When Considering Pros & Cons of Horse Feed Choices, Horse Owners Must Weigh Convenience Vs. Horse's Health.

We often talk with horse owners who are feeding the products they prefer based on criteria such as where they can purchase it, who the manufacturer is, or if it is pelleted or textured. However, this criterion is not always in the best interest of the horse. This is part of the reason that you see so many horse feed companies try to match the desires of the customer with the needs of the horse, or try to create new feeds in an attempt to differentiate themselves.

One debate that has been going on for years, has been the preference of pelleted feeds versus textured (sweet) feeds. It used to be that textured feeds were preferred 5 to 1 over pelleted feeds. Now that ratio is closer to 5 to 4. Pelleted feeds are often preferred because of attracting fewer flies, not bricking in colder months, and less ingredient sorting. A common misconception is that pelleted feeds are much lower in NSC (starch and sugar) because of less molasses used. Often pelleted feeds are still grain based, using corn, oats, barley or wheat as main ingredients which are the primary sources of soluble carbohydrates. One major feed company has both a textured and pelleted form of the same diet, and the NSC isn't more that 3% different.

The nutrition in the formula is more important for the horse than the form of the feed. So while pelleted feeds offer some handling advantages for horse owners, not all pelleted feeds are nutritionally the same.

Triple Crown has always been more of a textured based feed company where Triple Crown Senior (<http://www.triplecrownfeed.com/products/feeds/senior-horse-feed-formula-seniorhorsefeed>), Complete (<http://www.triplecrownfeed.com/products/feeds/upgraded-horse-diet-horse-diet/>) and Growth (<http://www.triplecrownfeed.com/products/feeds/horse-growth-formula-horsegrowth>) were our primary feeds. Triple Crown Lite (<http://www.triplecrownfeed.com/products/feeds/equine-supplement-lite-formula-equinesupplement>) and Low Starch (<http://www.triplecrownfeed.com/products/feeds/low-starch-horse-feed-formula-lowstarchhorsefeed>) are pelleted but are more specialty type products. In order to better coordinate the desire of the customer with the nutritional needs of the horse, Triple Crown has introduced a new feed called TLC™ – Total Lifetime Care™ (<http://www.triplecrownfeed.com/products/feeds/equinehealth-horse-nutrition-totallifetimehorsenutrition>). In essence, TLC functions as a pelleted version of all of our textured beet pulp-based feeds; Senior, Growth and Complete. While we still feel that Triple Crown Senior is the superior diet for truly senior horses having trouble maintaining body condition and Triple Crown Growth is still superior for foals and yearlings, TLC matches the primary guarantees fairly closely. When comparing TLC to Triple Crown Complete, Complete has a higher energy advantage. But, TLC will allow you to feed everything on the farm one diet in a pellet that some customers find preferable to our typical textured form.

We still caution horse owners to consider the special needs of very easy keepers and metabolically challenged horses that may be better Lite, Low Starch or 30% Supplement candidates. What's convenient for the owner is not always what's best for the horse.

**OTHER NEWS:**

Omega Max is a more affordable option for feeding ground flax. The convenient 25 pound bag has a guaranteed shelf life of 2 years and a much more economical price than most flax products found in a bucket on your feed dealers' shelves. Ask your dealer about getting Omega Max or buy online at [www.triplecrownfeed.com](http://www.triplecrownfeed.com).