



Pasture evaluation & **FORAGE INTAKE CALCULATOR**

Pasture grasses can dramatically vary based on several environmental factors. Since not all pasture is equal, consider the grazing spaces below for your horse before you start calculating.



DRYLOT

Horses that spend time turned out in a dry lot have less opportunity for grazing. This can help you control over-eating and allows for pasture recovery. Time in a dry lot would typically not count toward total grazing calculations.



OVERGRAZED PASTURE

Frequently used pastures can quickly become overgrazed and weak. Avoid overgrazing by rotating where your horse grazes to allow pasture time to recover. Continue to monitor pasture condition and maintain a healthy length of pasture growth. Time spent in an overgrazed section of pasture typically would not count toward total grazing calculations.



IDEAL PASTURE

Pasture is ideal when it contains a thick stand of grasses and legumes, minimal weeds, with minimal bare patches. It should consistently support your horse or horses at a plant height between 6-10 inches.



SEASONS & TIME-OF-DAY IMPACT PASTURE QUALITY

Grasses are higher in starch and sugar (non-structural carbohydrate or NSC) in both the spring and fall. Additionally, grasses tend to have higher NSC levels in the late afternoon and early evening.

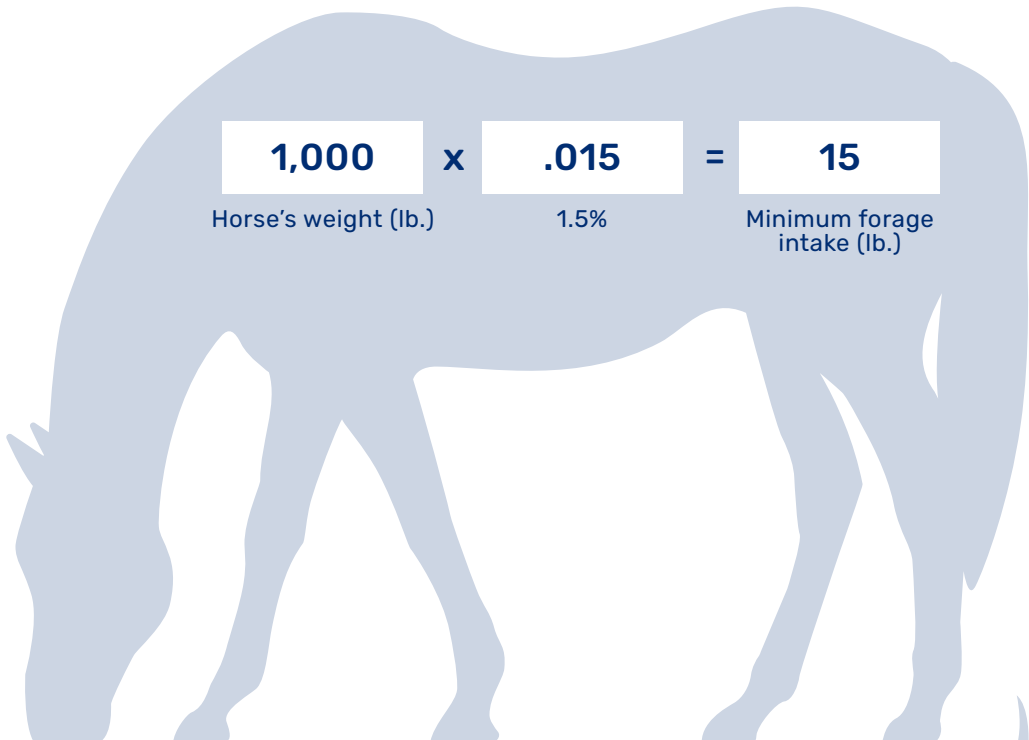
This is important to note for horses with metabolic issues who may benefit from being in a dry lot – with their fiber provided by a hay extender with low NSC.

IS YOUR HORSE CONSUMING ENOUGH FORAGE?

A healthy, mature horse should consume a minimum of 1.5 - 2% of their body weight per day in forage, pasture, or a combination of both. (i.e. A horse weighing 1,000 lb. should consume at least 15 - 20 lbs of forage per day.)

On average, a horse grazing on ideal pasture will consume 1 - 2 lb. of dry matter per hour.

For example: a horse on ideal pasture for six hours will consume about 9 lb. of forage.
This number is calculated by taking the average hourly intake and multiplying by pasture time.


$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \boxed{1,000} & \times & \boxed{.015} & = & \boxed{15} \\ \text{Horse's weight (lb.)} & & 1.5\% & & \text{Minimum forage intake (lb.)} \end{array}$$

DON'T KNOW YOUR HORSE'S WEIGHT?

<https://youtu.be/tgXfiLXGEe0>



ON AVERAGE:



ONE HOUR GRAZING
ON IDEAL PASTURE

=



1 - 2 LB.
FORAGE INTAKE

ONE HOUR = 1 - 2 LB. FORAGE

TWO HOURS = 2 - 4 LB. FORAGE

THREE HOURS = 3 - 6 LB. FORAGE

FOUR HOURS = 4 - 8 LB. FORAGE

FIVE HOURS = 5 - 10 LB. FORAGE

SIX HOURS = 6 - 12 LB. FORAGE

MINIMUM FORAGE REQUIREMENT CALCULATION

Monitoring pasture time and measuring forage by weight can help ensure your horse is getting enough fiber in their diet. High-quality fiber supports their hindgut health and energy output. Use the 3-step calculation to determine if your horse is getting their minimum daily forage intake.

STEP 1

Calculate your horse's daily minimum forage requirements in pounds.

<input type="text"/>	x	<input type="text" value=".015"/>	=	<input type="text"/>
Horse's weight (lb.)		1.5%		Minimum forage intake (lb.)

STEP 2

Calculate how much dry matter your horse consumes on pasture.

<input type="text"/>	x	<input type="text" value="1.5"/>	=	<input type="text"/>
Hours of daily pasture time		Average hourly intake		Approx. pasture forage intake (lb.)

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STEP 3

Subtract the pasture intake from the daily minimum to determine how many pounds of forage is needed outside of pasture.

<input type="text"/>
Forage to feed (lb.)

WHAT YOUR RESULTS MEAN

- A zero means your horse is getting their minimum requirement of daily forage intake on pasture.
- A positive number is the amount of forage in pounds still needed to meet their minimum daily requirement.
- A negative number is the amount of forage in pounds your horse gets above their minimum daily requirement.

NEXT STEPS

If your horse is not getting enough daily forage, consider a hay extender or adding additional time to pasture grazing.

If your horse is showing signs of digestive discomfort, dehydration or impaction while regularly above their daily minimum forage intake, consider adjusting their feeding program.