



The do's and don'ts of **FEEDING HAY & FORAGE**

Because your horse's gut health directly impacts their overall health and well-being, it's important to ensure they have a consistent high-quality fiber source. Check out these tips to help keep your horse conditioned and healthy.



DO GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY

Using your bare hands is an easy way to test the digestibility of your hay. Simply grab a handful of hay and crumple it into a ball. If you feel scratchy, stemmy pieces, the hay is overly mature and high in lignin, a naturally occurring polymer that is difficult to digest. If you can easily ball up the hay without scratching your hands, then your horse can enjoy it as is.



DON'T MISS OUT ON NUTRITION

You horse may be missing out on the nutrition and calories they need if their hay is stemmy and over-mature. Supplement with a hay extender to help maintain ideal fiber levels for your horse, and help your horse maintain optimal body condition.



DO A SNIFF TEST BEFORE FEEDING

High-quality, clean forage should smell fresh and slightly sweet. Avoid hay with an acidic or musty smell, as this can indicate mold or fermentation.



DON'T FEED MOLDY HAY

If forage has been sitting still and damp for too long, it may have grown mold. Inspect forage before feeding to ensure your horse is not consuming harmful mold and toxins.



DO INSPECT FOR WEEDS

Weeds are typically more common in the first hay crop of the summer – and many may be toxic for horses. Take time to inspect your forage for weeds. Be aware of toxic weeds in your area, or the area your hay is sourced from. Your local extension agent can be a resource for additional questions.



DON'T SECOND GUESS QUALITY

Even with a consistent supply, you might not be certain your hay is meeting your horse's nutritional needs. Submitting a sample for an official hay analysis can help you determine quality. [Equi-Analytical.com](https://equi-analytical.com) is a great resource for routine hay testing.

Questions about your horse's feeding program? We're here for you – contact a Triple Crown Nutrition expert today.

1-800-451-9916
triplecrownfeed.com/contact-us

