

## Hard keepers at risk for grain overload: When and how to recommend WeightGainWise™

There can be nothing more frustrating for an owner than trying to maintain weight on a hard-to-keep horse. Lack of energy and poor condition constantly have a negative effect on the horse's ability to perform at optimal levels. Whether the problem is related to age, temperament or work load, your client turns to you for answers. Upon physical exam you determine all is well systemically: his teeth look good and your deworming program is on target; however, symptoms such as inappetence, a history of mild colic, and lack of weight gain signal to you that this horse needs more than hay and starchy grains can provide. He needs a denser source of calories that won't stress his digestive tract.

Educating your client about how to tweak their feeding program is the next step. The goal is to lower the starch and sugar content of the diet while increasing calories and supporting a healthy appetite. Adding a high-fat, calorie-dense energy source that provides both prebiotics and probiotics will accomplish this goal.

Research has clearly shown that high-fat ingredients such as rice bran, flax, and flaxseed oils are readily utilized by horses. They contain 2.25 times as much energy as starchy grains, and they don't contribute to hindgut acidosis; nor do they cause the unhealthy glucose and insulin responses that can lead to metabolic disorders. Concentrated fat supplements allow the owner to reduce the size of the grain meal by replacing less energy-dense starches and sugars with high-calorie fats. The smaller meal size decreases the stress on the horse's digestive tract. Fats have the added value of reducing the hormone spikes that can cause excitability, so horses



consuming fat tend to be more relaxed and focused. A horse that feels less emotional stress is more likely to maintain a healthy weight. Along with the high-fat energy source, the addition of direct-fed microbials positively affect the health of a horse's digestive tract, which stimulates his appetite and makes the horse more likely to clean up at each meal.

Recommend WeightGainWise to provide safe, high-fat calories. WeightGainWise contains a concentrated blend of easy-to-digest, calorie-dense fats such as rice bran, ground flax, and flaxseed oil. As little as ½ pound per day (8 oz) is needed in most situations. WeightGainWise provides the direct-fed microbials *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*, *Aspergillus niger*, *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, and *Enterococcus faecium*. These organisms help regulate the pH balance in the gut and encourage beneficial bacteria to flourish so overall digestion improves and the horse's appetite is stimulated.

To achieve the best results prescribe WeightGainWise at a rate of 8 oz (two scoops) daily. Split the feedings into one 4-oz serving (1 scoop) two times per day. As with any change in a horse's diet, we recommend introducing WeightGainWise in small amounts and slowly increasing to the full serving (8 oz daily) over a period of a week. A horse's weight gain should be monitored routinely and the feeding rate adjusted accordingly, to maintain the horse's target weight.

