



Mitavite News Bulletin

3 Pile Rd, Somersby NSW 2250 Australia

www.mitavite.com.au

email: mitaviteenquiries@ingham.com.au

Nutritional Management of Sport and Leisure horses during the Equine Influenza Outbreak

Dr Ray Biffin BVSc Dip Ed

Horse management during the EI outbreak is the responsibility of the Dept of Primary Industries and all horse owners should keep themselves fully informed on developments through the appropriate DPI websites. Updates are posted on these sites daily.

We would urge you to comply at all times with hygiene and quarantine procedures as outlined on these sites or on www.outbreak.gov.au

This document is intended as a guide to best practice feeding of your horse in the various situations that may be encountered during the EI outbreak.

1. Horses in reduced work that have previously been in competition, but are not infected.
2. Horses that are being kept in work, but are not infected.
3. Horses that are at a reasonable level of fitness and are infected.
4. Horses that have EI.
5. Horses that have fully recovered and are being returned to full work.

1. If horses require a reduction in work they require a reduction in energy levels in the daily diet. The approximate intakes for a 500kg horse (mega joules/day) are idle 85; light work 90; medium work 100; hard work 120.

You can see that a horse changing from full work to suddenly being confined to a stable or yard or a reduction in work requires a sudden reduction in feed energy.

Sound feeding management almost always includes gradual changes in diet; however when there is a sudden change in workload the diet change has to be more rapid. If changing to a lower energy feed it is beneficial to keep to the same brand/type.

An example of this would be if a horse is being fed steam extruded feeds such as Mitavite Munga or Mitavite Pro Sport a suitable alternative would be either Mitavite Economix or Mitavite Xtra-Cool.

It is important to keep the daily feed volume the same. This can be achieved by substituting a lower energy feed such as Mitavite Xtra-Cool on a dipper for dipper basis or bulking up the feed with hay or chaff. (Please see notes on feeding roughage in section 4).

2. Horses in this situation can remain on their existing diets; however horses under stress of full work may have more demands on the immune system and therefore could be more prone to contracting EI.

It would be wise to include a high protein concentrate such as Vitamite Super Amino 66 which contains a balanced Amino Acid profile and a range of vitamins and minerals, in a small daily dose.

3. Horses that become infected when in work must be managed carefully, taking into account the drastic change in exercise and dietary requirements.

As with the first case scenario, it is important to reduce energy intake while keeping feed changes to a minimum.

Horses that have contracted EI may have a reduced appetite and therefore would benefit from the addition of Vitamite Super Amino 66 to the daily diet to provide high quality nutrition in a low dose.

4. As with humans and influenza, horses that have contracted the EI virus will be affected to a greater or lesser degree, depending on age, general state of health and immune system function. There has been plenty of good advice published on the care and management of your horse during this time.

From a feeding perspective it is important to ensure that your horse is eating adequately. As your horse is fighting a viral infection, feed rates should be higher than for a "spelling" horse in good health.

As a general guide a 500kg horse with EI would require a similar ration as a horse in light work.

Refer to the feeding guide on the bag to establish amounts of each feed required.

Highly digestible, palatable feeds such as Mitavite Breed-a, Mitavite Xtra-Cool or Mitavite Economix are ideal.

If your horse is confined to a box or yard it is important that you provide sufficient roughage in the form of chaff and hay. A horse requires at least 1% of its bodyweight (5kg for a 500kg horse) in roughage per day to maintain good gut health and avoid the risk of ulcers.

If available, good quality pasture hay should be provided on an adlib basis.

5. Care must be taken with horses that are returning to work after EI. Veterinary advice is that work should re-commence gradually after there are no remaining symptoms. The time taken to get back to full work is recommended to be approximately 1 week for each day the horse was sick, e.g. if it was sick for 5 days it won't be ready for strenuous work for 5 weeks.

Energy levels need to be increased gradually to account for the increased work load. Again care needs to be taken when changing feeds during this time.

If using Mitavite fully extruded feeds, a safe option would be to start on Xtra-Cool and mix in either Munga or Pro Sport as work and fitness increases.

The vitamin, mineral and amino acid profiles are compatible in these feeds which enables them to be mixed together without causing imbalances. For this reason it may be unwise to mix different brands of feeds together.

Your Vet should be your first point of contact with regards to any management issues when coping with EI, however our **Nutrition Team at Mitavite** are available for nutrition related enquiries.

Toll Free: 1800 025 487

Ph: 02 4340 9600

Fax: 02 4340 1708

