



FEED FOR THOUGHT

WHAT GRAIN SHOULD I FEED MY HORSE IN THE OFF-SEASON?

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After all the championships are awarded, the year-end shows come to a close, and winter sets in, competition horses are often giving some time off from heavy training and competition. The let-down period is wonderful for the horse mentally and physically as it gives him the chance to recovery from the stresses of the year.

During these periods of only light work and rest, it is also important to adjust your horse's feeding program to better reflect their energy expenditure. A common saying in equine nutrition is to "feed the work," which implies that the grain ration should reflect the amount and type of work that the horse is doing. As an example, if the horse is being fed any high performance feeds such as Cavalor® Endurix or Cavalor® Superforce, these should be removed from their diet and replaced by a feed from Cavalor's Harmony or Special Care lines which are lower in sugars and starches. While these easily digestible carbohydrates may be needed to help fuel the horse during the competition season, they can often cause excessive exuberance or even some health complications during the off season.

Most horses do very well on a high fiber, low starch feed during the winter, such as Cavalor® Strucomix Original or

Cavalor® Strucomix Senior. Strucomix Senior is particularly good for horses that seem to have a difficult time maintaining a healthy weight with the stresses of traveling and competition. A keen horse owner would take advantage of the winter break as an opportunity to add a significant amount of condition in preparation for the following competition season. For those horses that don't settle into their breaks as easily, one may wish to try Cavalor® Pianissimo, which is a calming feed which may help horses ease more gracefully into a less rigorous work schedule.

The off season is also a great time to address any nagging health or nutritional issues that may have been nursed during the end of the season. For example, a horse that is experiencing some gastrointestinal issues such as diarrhea or ulcers may greatly benefit from being placed on a ration made up entirely of Cavalor® Fiberforce. While Fiberforce was not originally designed to be fed alone to a horse in work, it has been shown in studies to be extremely beneficial for horses that need some digestive support. The off season is the perfect time to be able to really address any nagging issues that couldn't be fully addressed in between competitions.