

When you're wondering what horse feed is grain free, the short answer is every horse feed made without cereal grains such as oats, barley, maize, or wheat. These options are usually designed to be **starch low**, **sugar low**, and **high fibre**, with a clearer focus on **forage-led** nutrition. That makes them a popular choice for horses that need a calmer, more controlled diet, especially where **digestive wellbeing** or **laminitis risk** is a concern.

A grain-free diet does not mean "no energy" or "all hay and nothing else". A good grain-free **horse feed** can still be **properly balanced** and suitable for leisure horses, **performance feeding plans**, and horses that need careful **calorie intake** management. The key is understanding the different **types of horse feed**, reading the **label** properly, and choosing the right **day-to-day ration** for your horse's **body score** and workload.

What does grain-free horse feed mean?

Grain-free horse feed is nutrition that steers clear of traditional cereal grains as the main component. Instead of using starch from oats or barley, it uses ingredients such as chopped fibre, grass nuts, alfalfa, beet pulp, oil, and added **vitamins and minerals**. In many cases, this makes the feed more suitable for horses that do best on a **high fibre** diet.

Among the many **types of horse feed**, grain-free options sit with mixes, cubes, pellets, chaffs, balancers, and full ration feeds. Some are **complete horse feed**, meaning they are designed to supply the full nutritional package when fed as directed. Others are straights or supplements that must be paired with **forage** such as **hay** or **haylage**.

A grain-free diet is often preferred because the horse's **digestive system** is better suited to fibrous feeds than to large amounts of starch. That can support **hindgut health**, steadier behaviour, and improved **digestibility**. However, grain-free does not automatically mean suitable for every horse, and it does not replace the need for careful feeding management.

Which horse feeds are typically grain free?

Many **horse feed companies** now sell grain-free products, from basic fibre blends to fully fortified products. Brands such as **spillers horse feed** include a range of feeds suited to different needs, including low starch, low sugar, and fibre-first formulas. This also applies across other producers that focus on performance, leisure, and condition-building products.

Popular grain-free **types of horse feed** include:

- **Complete horse feed** created to replace or reduce the need for additional hard feed
- **Conditioning feed** for horses needing weight gain or improved topline
- Low starch balancers and ration builders
- Fibre cubes and pellets made from beet pulp, alfalfa, or grass
- Oil-rich feeds that boost energy without adding grain

A lot of these feeds are marketed as ideal for horses that need a calmer diet, better **digestive health**, or help maintaining a steady **body condition**. Some are specifically aimed at horses with metabolic sensitivity, while others are intended for active horses that need extra fuel without a heavy cereal load.

When comparing products, do not rely on the front of the bag alone. A feed may be grain free, but still contain quite a bit of **sugar** or enough **starch** to matter for a sensitive horse. Always check the analytical constituents and

ingredient list before deciding.

Is grain-free feed suitable for each horse?

Not in every case. Good **horse feeding rules** begin with the idea that the horse is a unique animal. A grain-free plan can be ideal for one horse and unsuitable for another. That is why **horse feed for beginners** advice usually opens with the basics: know the horse's weight, workload, temperament, forage access, and health history before selecting a feed.

Under standard **horse feed advice uk**, the first question is usually whether the horse needs hard feed at all. Many horses do well on **forage** alone, especially if they are easy keepers. Others need a grain-free hard feed to deliver extra nutrients, support condition, or help with training and work.

Grain-free feed may be a good idea if your horse:

- Is a **good doer** and gains weight easily
- Has had **laminitis** or is deemed at risk
- Needs a **low starch** diet for behavioural or digestive reasons
- Needs extra fibre rather than cereal energy
- Struggles with large amounts of traditional hard feed

It may be less suitable if the horse needs very high energy intake and cannot hold weight despite generous forage and an appropriate **complete horse feed**. In these cases, you may need a more concentrated solution, perhaps still grain free, but carefully chosen for energy density and nutrient profile.

How to review labels for grain-free ingredients

Reading labels is one of the most important skills in selecting grain-free **horse feed**. A feed can say "grain free" but still include ingredients that contribute substantial **sugar** or **starch**. First with the ingredient panel, then move to the nutritional analysis, and finally compare that information with the feeding directions.

Watch for:

- A clear statement that the feed is grain free
- Low reported **starch** and **sugar** levels
- A fibre-forward ingredient list
- Added **vitamins and minerals**
- Guidance for the total **daily ration**

Good ingredients often include alfalfa, beet pulp, grass, linseed, soya hulls, vegetable oil, and other fibrous sources. These add to a more **forage based** formula. If the feed is a **complete horse feed**, it should state that it can fulfil requirements when fed at the recommended amount. If not, it may need to be paired with a **balancer** or additional supplementation.

A **horse feeding chart** can help you compare the feed against your horse's size and workload, but it should be used in combination with the label rather than instead of it. For horses with special needs, especially those prone to **laminitis**, a diet review is more important than marketing terms.

Do grain-free diets still provide enough energy?

Yes, grain-free diets can deliver sufficient energy for numerous horses. What matters most is knowing the difference between energy from starch and energy from fibre and oil. A grain-free feed often uses fibre fermentation and fat as the main **energy source**, which can promote steady performance and better **digestive system** function.

For owners using a **horse feed calculator uk**, the goal is usually to align the feed to the horse's weight, workload, and condition without overfeeding calories. This helps avoid unnecessary weight gain while still supporting exercise, recovery, and overall health. The calculator can be a helpful starting point, but it cannot replace practical assessment of **body condition** and behaviour.

Grain-free diets may also affect **horse feed cost**. Some fibre-rich and specialised feeds are more expensive per bag than basic mixes, but the true cost depends on how much is fed, how concentrated the product is, and whether it replaces other components in the ration. A more expensive bag may last longer if the feed is highly concentrated and fed in smaller amounts.

A well-formulated **complete horse feed** can still supply enough energy for work, provided it is fed according to the manufacturer's **feeding guide**. For horses with higher demands, energy may be increased through additional forage, oil, and a carefully selected conditioning product rather than cereal grains.

Cereal-free feeding choices by type of horse

Different horses need different different feeding approaches, and that is where useful **horse feed advice uk** comes in handy. A simple **horse feeding chart** can help owners align feed type to workload, but it should always be adapted for temperament, condition, and health history. For **horse feed for beginners**, the best approach is to start with forage, then develop the ration only if needed.

For good doers and overweight horses

Good doers usually respond well on controlled rations and plenty of low-calorie **forage**. For these horses, horse feeding rules often focus on keeping **calorie intake** down while maintaining chewing time and digestive comfort. A grain-free option can work very well here because it often supports a **high fibre**, low **starch** approach.

Use the **horse feed calculator uk** as a guide, then monitor bodyweight regularly and adjust. Do not use overfeeding conditioning products, even if they are grain free, because some still supply concentrated energy. For many good doers, a balancer with measured forage and a small amount of fibre feed is enough.

For hard keepers and working horses

Poor doers and horses in heavier work may need a more generous ration. In these cases, a **complete horse feed** can be a practical option because it provides a nutrient-dense base without having to build a complicated mix from scratch. Some owners also use a home-made **horse feed mix recipe** to combine fibre, oil, and additional digestible calories.

For a **performance horse**, grain-free feeding can still support training if the ration is well planned. The most important factors are digestibility, fibre quality, and enough energy to maintain condition and recovery. A sensible mix may include a high-quality fibre feed, oil, and a balancer to cover **vitamins and minerals**.

How much does grain-free horse feed cost?

Horse feed cost differs greatly depending on type, level of concentration, and brand. When people ask **how much does horse feed cost**, the simple answer is that it depends on the feed's density and how much your

horse actually needs daily. Grain-free products often are more expensive per bag than basic cereal mixes, but they may be fed in smaller quantities.

Several factors influence cost:

- Whether the product is a **complete horse feed** or a supplement
- The level of fibre and fat sources
- Added nutrients and targeted nutritional support
- Brand positioning from **horse feed companies**
- How much is needed in the **daily ration**

It is useful to compare the cost per day rather than the price per bag. A more dense feed may look expensive, but if it replaces several other items in the diet, the overall **horse feed cost** may be fair. Always work out feeding by the recommended amount, not by the front-label claim.

Can you make a grain-free horse feed mix at home?

Certainly, but it should be done cautiously. [natural horse feed](#) A home **horse feed mix recipe** can be beneficial for people who want oversight over ingredients, but it is easy to create an imbalanced ration if you do not account for **vitamins and minerals**, calories, and protein. Not every **types of horse feed** are appropriate for DIY blending, especially if the horse has health concerns or special nutritional needs.

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A lot of people mix fibre chop, beet pulp, linseed, oil, and a balancer. But, this is only advisable if the entire feed ration remains **nutritionally balanced**. If you make your own mix, benchmark it with reputable feeds from **horse feed companies** and make sure you are not lacking key nutrients.

The biggest issue with home-mixed rations is thinking grain free automatically means healthy or complete. Without proper balancing, a feed can be too low in protein, too heavy in **sugar**, or lacking in crucial micronutrients. If you are uncertain, use a ready-made grain-free feed or get professional **horse feed advice uk**.

10 rules of feeding horses when picking grain-free feed

These **10 rules of feeding horses** help keep grain-free diets sensible, safe, and practical:

- Build the diet on **forage** first.
- Choose **grain free** feeds that are also **low sugar** and **low starch** if necessary.
- Tailor feed to the horse's **body condition** and workload.
- Review the **feed label** rather than relying on marketing language.
- Consult a **horse feeding chart** as a guide, not a fixed rule.
- Offer any new feed gradually to support **digestive health**.
- Do not assume all grain-free feeds are equal in energy or nutrition.
- Think about whether the ration needs a **balancer** or a **complete horse feed**.
- Keep an eye on **laminitis** risk and overall **hindgut health**.

- Evaluate the diet regularly and adjust as work, season, or condition changes.

Following these rules will help you create a practical feeding plan rather than simply selecting a trendy product. Grain-free feeding works best when it is part of a careful, forage-led approach.

FAQ: grain-free horse feed questions answered

What horse feed is grain free?

Grain-free horse feed is any feed produced without cereal grains such as oats, barley, wheat, or maize. It usually relies on fibre, oil, and other non-cereal ingredients to provide energy and nutrients. Many grain-free products are also low starch, low sugar, and high fibre.

Is grain-free horse feed always better?

Not always. It is better for some horses, but not automatically for all. The right feed depends on workload, body condition, digestive health, and individual sensitivity. Some horses do very well on a grain-free diet, while others may need a different approach that still fits their needs.

Can a horse get enough energy without grain?

Yes. Horses can get enough energy from forage, fibre, oil, and well-formulated complete horse feed. A grain-free diet can still support a performance horse or poor doer if it is carefully balanced and fed in the right quantity.

What should I look for on a grain-free feed label?

Check for ingredient lists that emphasise fibre sources, plus analytical values for starch and sugar. See if the feed is a complete horse feed, and includes vitamins and minerals, and how much should be fed each day. The feeding guide counts as much as the ingredients.

How do I choose the right grain-free horse feed for my horse?

Begin with your horse's condition, workload, and any health concerns such as laminitis risk. Refer to horse feed advice uk sources, compare feed labels, and decide whether you need a balancer, conditioning feed, or complete horse feed. For horse feed for beginners, a forage-first plan is usually the best starting point.