

When you're wondering what horse feed is grain free, the short answer is any horse feed made without cereal grains such as oats, barley, maize, or wheat. These feeds are usually designed to be **lower in starch, sugar low**, and **higher in fibre**, with a stronger focus on **forage based** nutrition. That is why they are a popular choice for horses that need a calmer, more controlled diet, especially where **digestive wellbeing** or **laminitis concern** is a concern.

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

What does grain-free horse feed mean?

Grain-free horse feed is nutrition that does not include traditional cereal grains as the main component. Instead of using starch from oats or barley, it contains ingredients such as chopped fibre, grass nuts, alfalfa, beet pulp, oil, and added **vitamins and minerals**. In many cases, this makes the feed more appropriate for horses that do best on a **high fibre** diet.

Among the many **types of horse feed**, grain-free options are found alongside mixes, cubes, pellets, chaffs, balancers, and full ration feeds. Some are **complete horse feed**, meaning they are designed to provide 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 chosen 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.

What horse feeds are generally grain free?

A lot of **horse feed companies** now sell grain-free options, from basic fibre blends to fully supplemented 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. The same applies across other producers that focus on performance, leisure, and condition-building products.

Common 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

Many 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 a lot 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 every horse?

Not necessarily. Good **horse feeding rules** begin with the idea that the horse is different. A grain-free plan can be perfect 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 requires 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 supply 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 considered 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, possibly still grain free, but carefully chosen for energy density and nutrient profile.

How to check labels for grain-free ingredients

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

Look for:

- A clear statement that the feed is grain free
- Reduced **starch** and **sugar** levels
- A fibre-rich ingredient list
- Supplemented **vitamins and minerals**
- Instructions for the total **daily ration**

Good ingredients often include alfalfa, beet pulp, grass, linseed, soya hulls, vegetable oil, and other fibrous sources. These help provide 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 together 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.

Can grain-free feeding plans still provide enough energy?

Absolutely, grain-free diets may deliver sufficient energy for numerous horses. The key is understanding 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 support 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 prevent 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 costlier 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.

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Cereal-free feeding choices by horse type

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

For easy keepers and overweight horses

Easy keepers 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.

Take guidance from the **horse feed calculator uk** as a guide, then check 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 [Learn more here](#) forage and a small amount of fibre feed is enough.

For hard keepers and working horses

Hard keepers and horses in heavier work may need a more generous ration. In these cases, a **complete horse feed** can be a sensible 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 presentation, nutritional concentration, and brand. When people ask **how much does horse feed cost**, the truth is that it depends on the feed's density and how much your horse actually needs per day. Grain-free products often have a higher price per bag than basic cereal mixes, but they may be fed in smaller quantities.

Several factors influence price:

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

It is useful to compare daily cost rather than the price per bag. A more nutrient-rich feed may appear expensive, but if it substitutes for several other items in the diet, the overall **horse feed cost** may be manageable. Be sure to figure feeding by the recommended amount, not by the headline on the label.

Can you prepare a without-grain horse feed mix at home?

Yes, but it should be done carefully. A home **horse feed mix recipe** can be beneficial for people who want oversight over ingredients, but it is simple to create an unbalanced ration if you do not account for **vitamins and minerals**, calories, and protein. Many **types of horse feed** are appropriate for DIY blending, especially if the horse has medical problems or special nutritional needs.

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

The greatest risk with home-mixed diets is assuming grain free automatically means safe or sufficient. Without proper formulation, a feed can be too low in protein, too heavy in **sugar**, or missing in crucial essential nutrients. If you are unsure, choose a commercial grain-free feed or seek professional **horse feed advice uk**.

10 guidelines for feeding horses when selecting grain-free feed

The following **10 rules of feeding horses** help make grain-free diets reasonable, safe, and practical:

- Base the diet on **forage** initially.
- Select **grain free** feeds that are also **low sugar** and **low starch** when required.
- Tailor feed to the horse's **body condition** and activity level.
- Check the **feed label** rather than relying on marketing language.
- Use a **horse feeding chart** as a guide, not a fixed rule.
- Add any new feed gradually to support **digestive health**.

- Do not assume all grain-free feeds are equal in energy or nutrients.
- Think about whether the ration needs a **balancer** or a **complete horse feed**.
- Monitor **laminitis** risk and overall **hindgut health**.
- Review the diet regularly and modify as work, season, or condition changes.

Following these rules will help you build a practical feeding plan rather than simply selecting a trendy product. Grain-free feeding works best when it is part of a thoughtful, 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 supply 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 meets 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 portion.

What should I focus on on a grain-free feed label?

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

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

Start with your horse's condition, workload, and any health concerns such as laminitis risk. Use horse feed advice uk sources, assess 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.