

If you want to know what horse feed is grain free, the short answer is a horse feed made without cereal grains such as oats, barley, maize, or wheat. These feeds are usually designed to be **starch low**, **sugar low**, and **high fibre**, with a greater focus on **forage focused** nutrition. This 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 **nutritionally balanced** and suitable for leisure horses, **performance horse diets**, and horses that need careful **calorie intake** management. The key is knowing the different **feed options**, reading the **feed label** properly, and choosing the right **daily ration** for your horse’s **body score** and workload.

What exactly is grain-free horse feed mean?

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

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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 deliver 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 generally grain free?

Many **horse feed companies** now sell grain-free options, from simple fibre blends to fully supplemented products. Brands such as **spillers horse feed** include a range of feeds aimed at 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.

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

- **Complete horse feed** designed 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 raise energy without adding grain

Many of these feeds are marketed as appropriate 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 right for every horse?

Not in every case. Good **horse feeding rules** begin with the idea that the horse is an individual. A grain-free plan can be ideal for one horse and unfitting for another. That is why **horse feed for beginners** advice usually begins 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 really 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, potentially 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 considerable **sugar** or **starch**. Start with the ingredient panel, then move to the nutritional analysis, and finally compare that information with the feeding directions.

Watch for:

- A direct claim that the feed is grain free
- Minimal listed **starch** and **sugar** levels
- A roughage-focused ingredient list
- Added **vitamins and minerals**
- Guidance for the total **daily ration**

Suitable 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.

Can grain-free diets also provide enough energy?

Yes, grain-free diets may deliver sufficient energy for numerous horses. The key 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 support steady performance and better **digestive system** function.

For owners using a **horse feed calculator uk**, the goal is usually to match 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 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.

Cereal-free ration options by horse type

Different types of horses need different varied feeding strategies, and that is where helpful **horse feed advice uk** becomes useful. A simple **horse feeding chart** can guide owners pair feed type to workload, but it should always be tweaked for temperament, condition, and health history. For **horse feed for beginners**, the safest approach is to start with forage, then build the ration only if needed.

For easy keepers and overweight horses

Weighty horses 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 check bodyweight regularly and adjust. Steer clear of 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

Hard keepers and horses in heavier work may need a more generous ration. In these cases, a **complete horse feed** can be a useful 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 varies a lot depending on type, nutrient density, 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 daily. 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 quality 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 can be helpful to compare the cost per day rather than cost per bag. A more nutrient-rich feed may [complete horse feed](#) look expensive, but if it replaces 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 label headline.

Can you prepare a grain free horse feed mix at home?

Certainly, but it should be done carefully. A home **horse feed mix recipe** can be useful for owners who want oversight over ingredients, but it is common to create an imbalanced ration if you do not account for **vitamins and minerals**, calories, and protein. Not every **types of horse feed** are suitable for DIY formulating, especially if the horse has health issues or particular nutrition needs.

Many horse owners combine fibre chop, beet pulp, linseed, oil, and balancer feed. That said, this is only advisable if the overall ration remains **nutritionally balanced**. If you build your own mix, benchmark it with reputable feeds from **horse feed companies** and be certain you are not missing key nutrients.

The main risk with home-mixed diets is believing grain free automatically means healthy or complete. Without proper balancing, a feed can be too low in protein, too high in **sugar**, or short in crucial micronutrients. If you are not sure, select a ready-made grain-free feed or seek professional **horse feed advice uk**.

10 rules of feeding horses when selecting grain-free feed

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

- Base the diet on **forage** initially.
- Choose **grain free** feeds that are also **low sugar** and **low starch** when required.
- Match feed to the horse's **body condition** and activity level.
- Inspect the **feed label** rather than relying on marketing language.
- Rely on a **horse feeding chart** as a guide, not a fixed formula.
- Offer any new feed gradually to support **digestive health**.
- Never assume all grain-free feeds are equal in energy or nutrition.
- Assess whether the ration needs a **balancer** or a **complete horse feed**.
- Watch for **laminitis** risk and overall **hindgut health**.
- Evaluate the diet regularly and adjust as work, season, or condition changes.

Sticking to these rules will help you create a practical feeding plan rather than simply choosing a trendy product. Grain-free feeding works best when it is part of a well-planned, forage-led approach.

FAQ: grain-free horse feed questions answered

What horse feed is grain free?

Grain-free horse feed is any feed formulated 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 fits their needs.

Can a horse get enough energy without grain?

Absolutely. 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 focus on 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, if it contains vitamins and minerals, and how much should be fed each day. The feeding guide matters as much as the ingredients.

How should I select the right grain-free horse feed for my horse?

Start with your horse's condition, workload, and any health concerns such as laminitis risk. Refer to 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.