



Dehydration

The perfect solution

The detrimental effects of dehydration are the biggest killers of horses today. That's because it is notoriously difficult to make a horse drink – hence the saying 'you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink'

The saying is so old that it has translated into "stubbornness" in today's colloquial language. Thankfully, Sandra Murphy BSc Equine Sports Science and Senior Nutritionist at Equidiet (UK) Ltd has come up with a solution. As she explains:

The reason it is so difficult to make horses drink is because 'thirst' is a regulatory response caused primarily by a shift in concentrations of salts (or electrolytes) such as sodium, chloride and potassium in and around the cells of the body. This imbalance can be caused by a number of different things such as: sweating, exercise, disease, excessive water loss or restricted water intake.

Basically, thirst is controlled by the body, which maintains the balance of fluid levels in a strictly controlled process called homeostasis. To illustrate this point, consider a landlord in a the pub. He will put a bowl of salty peanuts on the bar to make you drink his beer, because eating them increases the concentration of salt within your body. It is

well known that "wherever salt goes water follows" – therefore very soon afterwards you will ask the barman for another drink to even out the balance of salt. However if the landlord was to put a pint of water on the bar and made you drink it, then you would not feel thirsty and you would not buy a drink.

In essence the thirst mechanism is switched on and off to regulate this balance, although this response is sometimes masked in horses, so even when the horse is clearly dehydrated, it may not voluntarily ingest water.

Traditional ways of trying to get fluids into horses, such as flavoured water, have been around for centuries, the main one being molasses, which makes water sweet, palatable and therefore more desirable. However this method still largely relies on the thirst mechanism and the sugar can make them 'fizzy'.

More often than not horses will only drink enough to quench their thirst, rather than to satisfy their metabolic fluid needs. This may not have a huge effect on a horse that is just

out grazing under no stress, however many horses are being asked to perform feats of extraordinary strength, agility and stamina and a lack of metabolic water can have a devastating effect on their bodies and in some cases cause sudden death.

The traditional solution to this problem has been to administer fluids intravenously or via a nasogastric tube (stomach tube), which is not ideal, but if you could trick the horse into drinking then you could administer water whenever it was necessary by voluntary ingestion.

EquidGel™ is the ideal solution. When mixed with water it forms a gel, which is actually a high fibre feed. It is a totally natural, 85% fibre, highly palatable alfalfa based feed, with a high oil content, which will boost energy levels. Because it is a feed it appeals to the horse's very powerful instinct to forage, which can override the thirst response in favour of food. So, when you lead your horse to a bucket of EquidGel™ you can make him drink as much as you want.

How will EquidGel™ benefit my horse?

You can use EquidGel™ to hydrate your horse before, during and after travelling; before, during and after competing; working in hot temperatures; when lactating; as a follow-on 'liquid fibre' for weaning foals; or pre- and post-operative hydration and nutrition. You can also use EquidGel™ as a daily feed for the following: conditioning; dental issues; gastric ulcers; rehabilitation and much more.

EquidGel™ patent pending formulation provides the natural solution whenever your horse needs to drink as it is the only feed that allows ingestion of large amounts of water to quench metabolic needs voluntarily, making it ideal for transporting horses, hydrating while competing and regulating the digestive system. Because there is now a means of taking on fluid voluntarily, EquidGel™ has the potential to save the lives of horses around the world.

"We've been using EquidGel on one of my jumping ponies since February 2014 and he is totally transformed. We use it while travelling at home and abroad. We also use it while competing and gives us the piece of mind that our ponies are well hydrated and full of nutrition. It's a product that we could not live without!"



Young rider Leonie Aitkenhead

For online nutritional advice please visit www.equidiet.org.uk, email equidiet.org@gmail.com, call 01472 859593 or follow us on Facebook and Twitter