



EquidGel – A new Hydration and Nutrition system

EquidGel, a patented hydration and nutrition delivery system was launched during the prestigious BETA international trade fair; showcased in the New Product Gallery and also entered into the ETN Innovation Awards. EquidGel is a multi-faceted feeding system which is set to benefit every area within the equine industry. Designed and formulated by Equine Nutritionist Sandra Murphy BSc (Hons) Equine Sports Science, EquidGel has been extensively researched and its ingredients are backed by scientific data which proves how EquidGel can benefit the health and wellbeing of all horses, no matter what job they do.

With only a few ingredients, EquidGel goes right back to basics, 80% is highly nutritious grass/alfalfa meal along with high

quality oatmeal, and a high energy omega-3 oil contained within a novel natural ingredient which when mixed with water produces a soluble fibre gel, this gel not only has a high nutritional value in itself, it holds 27 times its own weight in water suspending the particles of grass meal and other nutrients within it, which gives EquidGel a nutritional value of 14.9 MJ digestible energy per kg, which puts it on a par with many good quality conditioning feeds on the market today.

However there is a big difference between this and other feeds, EquidGel is fibre based and the unique patented system allows the water holding gel to deliver an increased amount of hydration to the hindgut increasing the volume of the gastrointestinal fluid pool along with providing good quality nutrition.

EquidGel is indicated in the following situations:

Sustained exercise or exertion, such as endurance, performance horses, hunting polo etc. - The ability of EquidGel to hold water within a gel allows more water to pass through the small intestine (the initial site of free water absorption to the interstitial fluid where there is no storage) into the hindgut where it can be stored for use in times of exertional stress or sustained sub maximal exercise. The stored water and nutrition molecules are broken down by microbes to produce slow release energy and hydration which helps to prevent the detrimental effects of dehydration and fatigue.

Equines working in temperature in excess of 30°C, such as donkeys, asses and



mules where heat stress can increase water intake by up to 400% - EquidGel is highly palatable and can be used to provide both hydration and nutrition on demand increasing the gastrointestinal fluid pool allowing a more stable bodily fluid balance allowing these horses to not only benefit from highly nutritious fibre but also to benefit from being well hydrated to perform their work on a daily basis. Natural electrolytes such as sodium and potassium are at adequate levels to help regulate body fluid balance, helping to support those that are lost in sweat.

Horses that have been neglected and are suffering from dehydration and malnutrition – EquidGel provides a highly palatable, easily digestible meal to a horse that may have a compromised digestive system. EquidGel is a fibre based feed which contains a high level of Omega-3 oil which increases the energy density of the feed to provide slow release energy. The storage of excess fat increase body condition, promotes a healthy coat and hooves. EquidGel may be a helpful tool in the rehabilitation of equines and possibly has a use in the veterinary practices before and after elective surgery procedures because of the small particle size and the increased volume of water, impaction colic is less likely to occur;

Horses travelling long distances - According to World Horse Welfare, around 80,000 horses travel across Europe every year. The majority are travelling to slaughter, and strict guidelines have been introduced to provide these horses with a better quality of life. EquidGel could be an efficient, labour saving method of providing horses such as these with simultaneous hydration and nutrition on demand allowing them to obtain slow release, non heating energy and remain well hydrated for the journey.

Performance horses can also benefit from EquidGel before and after travelling

long distances. Many horses do not take in adequate water and nutrients before or during long hours of transportation and it has been documented that the amount of work a horse has to do to keep balanced whilst moving about in the vehicle is equivalent to a fast walk; therefore if the horse is having to perform this type of constant exercise for in some cases 4 hours at a time, it is no wonder they require time to recover on arrival at their destination. The soluble fibre formed allows more water and good quality fibre to reach the hindgut and to provide a constant release of nutrients and water to replenish those used during the journey allowing the horse to arrive fresh and recover quickly.

A growing number of competition horses, in particular racehorses, are being diagnosed with gastric ulceration. High starch feeds such as grain have been shown to irritate gastric ulcers causing considerable pain. EquidGel has a very low level of non structural carbohydrates (sugars), but a high level of fibre which over time causes less acid to be produced in the stomach. With a pH of 6.5 the soluble fibre gel seems to soothe and alleviate this condition, possibly acting like an antacid for horses.

EquidGel may also have the beneficial effect of reducing excitable behaviour and helping to promote regulation of some metabolic disorders such as Laminitis. It has also been documented that the soluble fibre gel may also form a barrier between the contents of the stomach and the gut wall reducing the absorption rate of carbohydrates into the blood stream, This could reduce fluctuations in blood sugar levels, possibly reducing insulin production.

There are many more applications for EquidGel such as:

Pregnant and lactating mares – High energy, hydration and good complete protein

profile for growth and milk production.

Weanling foals – High fibre, low carbohydrate for reduced excitability. High oil for condition good hydration levels and complete protein profile for growth.

Horses with compromised dentition that are unable to ingest adequate amounts of fibre. EquidGel can be ingested easily in the form of a drink reducing loss of body weight and condition.

For endurance horses, EquidGel is highly palatable and increases the volume of the hindgut fluid pool. Feeding time is reduced as EquidGel is in a semi liquid form which empties the stomach quicker than a grain feed which will sit in the stomach producing acid. For those horses who are working hard the diversion of blood from the digestive system to the muscles means that stomach ulcers may develop.

The product is gaining popularity due to its sheer versatility and simplicity and in some cases the effects can be seen instantaneously. EquidGel is set to become a valuable tool in the management of horses by allowing owners, veterinarians and organisations to provide not only a high level of fibre based nutrition, but to enable them to deliver hydration whenever horses in their care require it.

Following the launch of EquidGel at BETA, samples have been provided to major organisations and top UK and International riders within each discipline, it is also set to be reviewed by highly regarded scientists and nutritionist over the next few months, with full production due to commence in April 2014.

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