



Reducing the Risk of Colic

- Adequate fibre – it is important to ensure that you feed adequate fibre to maintain a healthy digestive system. Horses should be fed a minimum of 1.5% of their body weight in fibre per day
- Digestible fibre – not all fibre is the same! Straw and very coarse hay should be avoided with horses prone to colic as they are not very digestible. Look for soft leafy hay and digestible fibre feeds such as grass, alfalfa and sugar beet products.
- Make changes to the forage gradually - a recent change in hay or forage increases the risk of colic by 9.8 times (Cohen et al., 1999), this is a greater risk than a recent change in grain or concentrate.
- Feed a low starch ration – Concentrate intake of between 2.5-5kgs per day increases the risk of colic by 4.77 times (Tinker et al., 1997). The main energy storage in cereals is starch. Feeding cereals increases the risk of colic - if you need to feed cereals the following tips will help reduce the risk:
 - Meal size- If feeding cereals feed a maximum of 1.75kg per meal for a 500kg horse
 - Cooked cereal - If you need to feed cereals use cereals that have been cooked. Cooking processes such as micronisation and extrusion increase the digestibility of starch making it more available for digestion in the small intestine and reducing problems with starch overload.
- Digestive supplement – If you have a horse prone to colic or digestive upsets try adding a digestive supplement such as those that contain prebiotics and yeast.
- Turnout - Increasing time spent at pasture was found to be associated with a decreased risk of recurrent colic (Scantlebury et al., 2014, Hudson et al., 2001).

For Further feeding advice call the Dengie Feedline on 0845 345 5115 or email feeds@dengie.com