



BETFOR®

Questions & Answers



Betfor – a real classic!

The more you know about animal feed, the better equipped you are to feed your horse in an optimal way. But this is not an easy task, since there is a lot to learn and many aspects to consider.

This short brochure contains information and facts about a real classic among Swedish animal feeds. Betfor has been on the market for over 70 years. With the growing popularity of equestrian sports, more and more people have discovered how giving Betfor as a supplement improves your horse's performance and wellbeing.

Read the brochure and learn a little a bit more about animal feed. Both you and your horses will notice the benefits!



*Giving Betfor as a supplement
improves your horse's
performance and wellbeing*



What is Betfor?

Betfor is a natural feed derived from Swedish sugar beets. The product is simply dried beet fibre and molasses, and is a natural source of minerals and vitamins. It contains no preservatives or other additives.

Does Betfor contain starch?

No, and this is one of the benefits of Betfor. Cereals such as oats, barley, wheat and maize are high in starch. As a result, cereals eaten in large quantities can disrupt the whole balance of the horse's digestive system. Betfor, on the other hand, provides highly digestible energy, for example in the form of pectin, which enhances the microbial flora in the large intestine. This makes Betfor an excellent supplement or substitute for other compound feeds

Why does Betfor need to be soaked?

Because Betfor is a dry feed, it quickly absorbs large quanti-



Stephanie and Nicole Holmén, two of future Show Jumping stars

ties of water. To make Betfor easier for your horse to eat, and to prevent pieces of food to get stuck in the oesophagus, Betfor must be soaked thoroughly before feeding. Drying is an old technique for prolonging the storage life of food and animal feed. Drying also makes Betfor easier and cheaper to transport and handle.

How do I soak Betfor?

Betfor shreds should be soaked for at least one hour, and Betfor pellets should be soaked for at least two hours. The easiest method is to soak Betfor in the evening to prepare for the morning feeding, and in the morning for the evening feeding. In warm summer temperatures, you should keep the soaking time as short as possible because the heat can cause the feed to ferment.

Soak one part Betfor shreds in 3 parts water. If using pellets, soak 1 part Betfor in 4 parts water.



Does soaking Betfor reduce the horse's absorption of nutrients?

No, soaking Betfor causes no adverse effects. Horses are by nature herbivores, and grass contains 80-85% water. The saliva produced when a horse eats mainly acts as a lubricant, and contains only a small amount of digestive enzymes. So the water that the feed absorbs when soaked does not affect the horse's absorption of nutrients.

Why is Betfor good for the horse's hydration?

Soaked Betfor has a high water content and therefore helps to improve the horse's hydration and performance. Particularly during the warm summer period, a horse needs plenty of water, especially prior to competitions and prolonged physical exercise. Betfor is also a good way of keeping a horse hydrated during transport, since the horses love the soaked shreds.

How does Betfor affect the horse's absorption of food?

Betfor has a balanced sugar content which allows the microbes in the large intestine to thrive and create maximum health benefits. In fact Betfor has approximately the same low sugar content as natural pasture grass.

Betfor is an excellent way of keeping your horse hydrated during transport and before competitive events and prolonged physical exercise. Betfor also helps restore the horse's moisture balance after strenuous training and competitions.

Does Betfor affect the horse's ability to absorb nutrients?

Yes, especially when you feed your horse with low-energy hay. Grass harvested late is usually too low in calories, energy, protein and sugar. Meanwhile, it has a high content of carbohydrates (e.g. lignin) that are hard to digest. Since beet fibre contains easily digestible carbohydrates (pectin) that provide fast energy, Betfor is ideal for giving your horse an energy boost.

Can I give my horse Betfor when I change the feed ration?

You not only can but should give your horse Betfor when you change its feed ration. When a horse's feed changes, the microorganisms in its large intestine and appendix have to perform new tasks. The process is quite complex, but simply speaking, different microorganisms perform different tasks in the intestines. One type of microbe specialises in attacking cellulose, another is an expert on pectin, and so forth.

When a horse's feed ration changes, the microbes that are specialised in processing the new feed component to multiply to manage the task. Betfor's high content of beet fibre and the sugar stimulate the microorganisms in the horse's intestines. Betfor "provides" fuel and creates a healthy breeding environment for the intestinal microorganisms. This makes Betfor ideal when you change your horse's feed or grazing conditions.

Should I analyse my horse's hay or silage?

Yes. When Betfor is included in the horse's feed ration, the energy content of the hay should determine how much Betfor you give your horse. If the hay is lower in energy content than expected you may need to supplement it with an additional 0.5-1.0 kg of a concentrated feed material such as Betfor every day. Always analyse the hay or silage you feed to your horse. This is crucial in order to achieve a balanced feed ration. If you buy the hay from someone else, you should ask them for an analysis.



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Is it true that horses that eat Betfor have less lactic acid in their muscles?

Yes. Betfor affects the horse's performance in several ways. In a scientific study*, horses that had part of their oat ration replaced with Betfor had more energy and less lactic acid in their muscles after a stress test than horses not fed with Betfor. When you have the chance to give your horse this advantage, of course you should take it.

Does Betfor harm the horse's teeth?

No. Betfor's sugar content does not affect the horse's teeth and does not cause tooth decay. Forage, molasses, fruits, root vegetables and cereals all naturally contain sugar, and horses have eaten these feed materials throughout ages. Tooth decay in horses is usually caused by some form of mechanical stress on the teeth.

Do some feeds make horses put on weight?

No. Horses do not put on weight because of a specific feed material. They put on weight when they consume more energy than they can burn. Horses are individuals, like people. Some have a tendency to gain weight, while others can eat a lot without gaining weight.

* Carina Palmgren-Karlsson (*Horses nutrient absorption – effects of oat substitution on feed digestibility and metabolic parameters*) Doctoral thesis, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), 2001.

How much Betfor should I give my horse?

When Betfor is given as a feed supplement – to boost your horse's wellbeing: 0.3-0.5 kg Betfor (dry weight) per day in two feeding sessions (morning and evening), in addition to the horse's normal full feed ration.

When Betfor is part of the horse's total feed ration – to boost the horse's wellbeing and provide an excellent concentrated feed supplement, based on level of physical activity, discipline and, in some cases, during pregnancy. 0.5–1.0 kg Betfor (dry weight) per day, combined with, for example, crushed oats, vitamins and minerals.

Nutritional content per kg feed

Dry Matter	91 %
Crude Protein	8,6 %
Crude Fat	1,4 %
Total Sugar	10,5 %
Calcium	0,8 %
Phosphorus	0,1 %
Metabolisable Energy	11,2 MJ/kg



Brief glossary:

DM = Dry Matter = the amount of the feed that remains after all the water has been dried out. For example, 1 kg of pasture grass contains roughly 80% water (=20% DS). 1 kg of hay contains roughly 14% water (=86% DS). 5 kg pasture grass or 1.2 kg hay each equal 1 kg DS.

Microbes/microorganisms = the bacterial flora in the horse's large intestine that contributes to breaking down the structural carbohydrates that were not broken down by the enzymes in the small intestine.

Forage = grass harvested for use as animal feed.

Pectin = a highly digestible carbohydrate which Betfor has a high content of.

Starch = a carbohydrate found in cereal kernels (but not in Betfor)



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