

## Oh, those sweet calories.....!

Many horses have problems in the way they metabolize carbohydrates and sugars. When these horses exhibit clinical signs, they may be diagnosed as Insulin Resistant (IR) or having Equine Metabolic Syndrome (EMS). It is important to know that the various sources of energy from feeds are digested and metabolized differently. The three main sources of energy for horses are carbohydrates (starch), fats, and proteins. There are many commercially prepared high fat, low starch diets now available for these horses. Managing pasture turn out and grazing is also of vital importance. Grazing muzzles can save these horses lives!



A way to identify horses with possible metabolic problems is to evaluate their overall appearance. Most of these horses will have abnormal fatty deposits along their neck (cresty) and at the base of the tail. Many geldings will also have increased fat deposits around their sheath. A long hair coat, low energy levels, recurring muscle, tendon, and/or ligament injuries, abscesses and laminitis are other good indicators of metabolic disorders. Blood tests are indicated to determine which disorder(s) is present. Research indicates that an overweight horse is more likely to become insulin resistant. Implementing a weight loss program through calorie and carbohydrate restriction, controlled exercise, and appropriate nutritional supplements may be all that is necessary to get insulin/glucose levels under control. Horses suffering from Insulin Resistance or Equine Metabolic Syndrome can greatly benefit from a nutrient specific supplemental program.

For more tips on healthy equine nutrition, find us at [www.kamanimalservices.com](http://www.kamanimalservices.com).