

What You Eat Is What You Are

There are many factors to consider when trying to manage a horse's weight or have them gain weight. To start with, the feed quality and source of calories within the feed is critical. We all know eating fat promotes gaining fat more than eating protein does. Did you know the quality of that fat affects the health of the cells throughout the body and that eating "bad" fats will decrease overall health and performance? A feed should be palatable, digestible, consistent, and made with high quality ingredients.



Next are the teeth. Proper dentition is needed to chew the feed, thereby increasing the surface area exposed for digestion (the "tip" for dental care is coming soon).

Then there is the stomach and intestinal tract where the feed is mixed with digestive enzymes and the microflora (bacteria and yeast) that are necessary to break down the food particles for absorption. A deficiency or imbalance of these enzymes, bacteria, and/or yeast, known as dysbiosis, can lead to poor digestion, malabsorption, and weight loss regardless of the feed quality or quantity given. Long term dysbiosis leads to leaky gut syndrome which creates a pro-inflammatory state within the body leading to a wide variety of problems varying from sore muscles and joints to laminitis and/or allergies.

Inflammation in the gut inhibits absorption of nutrients, exacerbates vitamin and mineral deficiencies, suppresses immune system functions, compromises normal detoxification pathways, and breaks down the protective barrier of the GI tract. Once the gut lining is damaged it can no longer ward off toxins and pathogenic protozoa, bacteria, viruses and yeasts. A "gut-conditioning" program will re-condition the digestive tract to reduce inflammation, promote healing and healthy weight management and weight gain when needed. Remember, no guts-no glory!

For more tips on healthy equine nutrition, find us at www.kamanimalservices.com.