



NATURAL SUPPLEMENTS FOR YOUR HORSE

BY ABDEL RAHMAN KHALIL

MOTHER NATURE HAS ALWAYS BEEN AND WILL ALWAYS BE OUR PRIME SOURCE OF NUTRITION. IT IS THE ONLY SOURCE OF NUTRITION FOR ALL CREATURES ON EARTH. HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A CHEETAH RELY ON SOME SORT OF STORE BOUGHT SUPPLEMENTS TO RUN AS FAST AS 120 KM/H? THE DEFINITE ANSWER IS NO. SO WHY CAN'T WE STICK TO THE BASICS AND SEE WHAT MOTHER NATURE HAS TO OFFER TO US AS NATURAL SUPPLEMENTS FOR OUR BELOVED HORSES ?

First we need to take a step back and determine **whether our horse is in need of supplements or not**. There are mainly three distinct reasons why horse people give their horses supplements. The first and overt reason is that the horse is growing older and naturally his biological structure cannot produce as much effort and high efficiency as before. Also his body is not as capable of easily extracting the minerals it needs from his normal food. In addition, senior horses (typically 15+ years) have a problem in storing and using energy, where senior horses tend to lose energy at a much faster rate than younger horses. That is where supplements come into play in giving the horse the essential minerals in an easy way and supplying extra energy to compensate for the fast rate energy is depleted. The mineral status of your horse can be either adequate, deficient, toxic or

unbalanced, where the only mineral status that results in "optimal health" is adequate.

Which brings us to the second reason **why your horse may be in need of supplements**, which is when your horse's mineral status is not adequate. The third and final reason is just an honest ambition to make sure that our beloved horses are taking in the best nutrition available, where most of us decide to give our horses supplements based on no more than a "gut feeling".

Whatever the reason that you think your horse needs a supplement, there is always a cheaper and more natural approach which is using **natural supplements**, for what follows in this article are some examples of natural supplements for your horse and the area in which they excel.

CORN

Corn is a very popular grain in the world and can offer your horse the most energy among grains (even more than oats). Corn can be bought straight or cracked, but be sure to introduce it to your horse slowly and double-check that it is free of mold. **If your horse has digestive problems it is not preferred to give your horse a lot of corn since it is difficult to digest.** Also old horses that need the most energy will find it difficult to chew straight corn; steamed or rolled corn can make it easier for them. Add as much corn as you wish to your horse's diet provided that the diet consists of at least 50% hay.

CORN OIL

Extracted from corn, corn oil is an exceptional source of fat for your horse to burn into energy. The addition of fat can also have a calming effect on your horse and it also provides more calories without adding additional grain. A far cry from corn, corn oil can be easily digested by your horse. **With the additional bonus of being great for the coat and hooves of your horse,** corn oil also supplies your horse with the essential fatty acids, mostly Omega-6 and some Omega-3. Beware to introduce corn oil slowly to your horse (7 to 10 days to adjust) and not give him too much for the reason that there is a far higher content of Omega-6 than Omega-3. This imbalance can create inflammation to your horse's tissues.



Barley

Barley is a grain that looks similar to oats, but it is lower in fiber and higher in energy. Barley sits directly between corn and oats in the grain family. In its raw form, barley can be very **hard to chew for horses** so it is commonly rolled, crushed or cooked before feeding. Some horses might not like its taste so cooking it before feeding it to your horses can make the taste better.



CHIA SEEDS

Chia seeds are one of the most highly nutritious seeds you can buy. They are perfect for humans and also amazing for horses. Chia seeds are high in fiber and protein which will help in repairing muscle tissues, growing stronger ones, and reducing soreness of muscles after a hard training session. Beside that chia seeds are filled with antioxidants and are found to diminish respiratory inflammation. Moreover, **chia seeds have the ability to calm down hot tempered horses due to the high content of fat chia seeds possess.** They also have high levels of Omega-3 which would be perfect if combined with corn oil due to the imbalance corn oil has between Omega-6 and Omega-3.



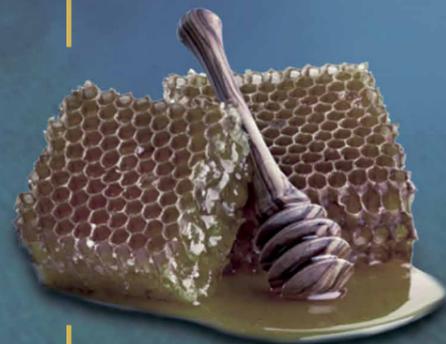
OATS

The almighty oat as we know it, is a marvelous source of fiber, protein and sugars for your horse. Oats also have the added benefit dissimilar to corn of being easily digested by horses. The protein and fibers in oats will build your horse's muscles and strengthen the tissues. **Oats excel more than any other grain in having a balanced nutritional content and being high in protein and fiber.** Feed them whole, rolled or crushed. The meal can also be balanced with a more high sugar content food such as corn or honey.



HONEY

Honey is like an elixir for most of the living creatures on earth including humans and horses. It has a ton of health benefits plus the added benefit of being a high energy food and having a sweet taste that will encourage your horses to eat all of their rations (no worry for picky eaters). Honey has a high content of glucose and is filled with antioxidant; which is why it is an energy supplement and is a sickness fighter. Honey can be partnered with garlic oil which is good for the cardiovascular and respiratory system of the horse or as mentioned above with oats. **Beware not to put large portions because like humans honey can raise sugar content in the blood suddenly** which can cause problems to your horse.



Other natural supplements

MUSHROOMS

SUNFLOWER SEEDS

FLAXSEEDS

In conclusion, most of the supplements you see in stores are either the above natural supplements mixed with each other or the extraction of the vitamins from the natural source. **Horses are herbivores which means they graze grass and they are meant to eat these natural foods.** So why do we pay more where we can give them the natural source and mix between these natural supplements ourselves and save the money for more shows or new horse boots? In a nutshell, we tend to pay more if the product is in a fancy box where we can get the same benefits for our horse from the natural source itself. 🍄

