

Mare and Foal Nutrition

The nutritional states of the mare during gestation and lactation, and the foal nutrition during its first few months can have repercussions for the foal for the rest of its life.

Regency Mare and Foal is designed to support 3 specific needs:

- Gestating mares nutritional needs during the last trimester
- Lactating mares
- Growing foals while with the dam
-

Gestating Mares

It is important that the gestating mare receive a balanced diet that can not only support fetal growth, but also better prepare the foal for the first few weeks after foaling. Mineral deficiencies can have long lasting effects on the foal, including increasing the chances of OCD problems. Milk is a relatively poor source of minerals, in particular iron, which puts the emphasis on prefoaling diets to ensure that the foal is born with a “reservoir” of minerals to meet its early needs.

It is also important that sufficient amino acid be available, not only for muscle development, but also bone and nervous tissue and all the essential enzyme activities. We include additional lysine, which is often the first limiting amino acid.

It is also important to supply enough carbohydrates (CHO) that the mare’s glucose level is high enough to help transport glucose to the growing fetus. This glucose is extremely important for the foal to be “thrifty” and stand and nurse. It is normal and mares need to have higher starch levels. In nature we find the CHO levels in forages are higher in the spring when foals are born. As we push for earlier birth dates we need to be sure we supply those carbohydrates from other sources of the diet.

Lactating Mares

Energy demands for lactating mares can be very high. Mares will produce 30 to 40 pounds of milk per day during the first the first 3 months of lactation and 20 pounds during the later lactation period. Mare’s milk is rich in protein and fat, therefore the mare’s diet must also have more protein and energy as well.

Given the long gestation period, we ask mares to become pregnant again long before we do other species, as such it is important that we keep them in positive energy balance, i.e. slightly gaining weight.

Growing Foals

Growing foals go from a purely milk diet during the first few days of birth to quickly “tasting” and trying new feed sources as well. It is common for foals to begin eating from their dams feed bucket. Most mares, but not all, will allow this behavior.

Foals are growing at an extremely high rate and demand a nutrient rich diet. At the same time there is evidence that large meals of soluble carbohydrates and subsequent spikes in insulin production may lead to bone development problems. Both mares and foals can benefit from multiple small meals as opposed to one or two large meals daily.

Weaning is often a stressful period on foals. It is not uncommon for them not to eat or greatly reduce their feed intake. Foals are often weaned in the summer or fall depending upon birth date. During these times of year forages are often not at their peak from a nutritional standpoint. Research has indicated that continued steady growth has resulted in the best skeletal development. Supplementing foal, but not overfeeding is a key to good growth and development.

Key Features of Prince Regency Mare and Foal Feed (#210007)

- Contains omega-3 fatty acids
- Chelated Mineral-superior biological availability
- Contains Natural Vitamin E- Greater biological availability with increased plasma concentrations compared to synthetic forms
- Contains Celmanax®-Celmanax is a Mannan Oligosaccharide (MOS). Published research has demonstrated the ability of this product to bind to salmonella and E. coli. *in vitro*. MOS has also been demonstrated to support the growth of Lactobacillus and Bifidobacterium, strains of probiotic bacteria. Celmanax® also provides a source of d-glucosamine which may be beneficial in joint lubrication.