



Metabolic Disease Management

Metabolic disease in horses can be divided into 2 major categories of Pituitary Pars Intermedia Dysfunction (PPID), formerly known as “Cushing’s Disease” and Equine Metabolic Syndrome. Both of these conditions can occur at the same time and have varying degrees of insulin resistance.

Testing: Early detection of these conditions is key in helping to prevent secondary conditions such as obesity, laminitis and a suppressed immune system, to name a few. Blood is pulled and submitted to an outside lab.

- Bloodwork should be repeated yearly as metabolic status can change from year to year and to be sure the appropriate dose of medication is given

Diet: Reduction of sugars in the diet is key!

- Concentrates: Grains should not be fed, if possible.
 - When needed, these should be low in starch and higher in fat (Safe Choice Special Care, Purina L/S, Triple Crown Low Starch).
 - Senior diets can be appropriate for horses with ideal or low body condition scores (<4)
- Ration balancer: These can be used to supplement necessary nutrients without the added calories that some grains may provide
 - Platinum Performance Equine, Triple Crown, Empower Balance, Enrich Plus
- Forage: New, sugar-rich grasses should be avoided. Grasses are also higher in late afternoon, so turnout at this time should be avoided.
 - Grazing muzzles can be used to limit grass intake.
 - Hay analysis should be performed to determine nutritional content
 - Soaking hay for 30-60 minutes prior to feeding can help reduce sugar content

Environment

- When possible, a regular exercise program should be used.
- Horses may still have trouble completely shedding their winter coats, so body clipping may be helpful to keep them from being too hot
- Using slow feed hay nets can increase the amount of time for horses to consume their hay

Medications: These can help to decrease frequency and side effects of these conditions which improves quality of life

- Prascend is the medication of choice to treat PPID. This is a commercially produced form of pergolide which allows more consistency and stability with treatment. Side effects are uncommon but can include inappetance, loose manure, and weight loss.
- Thyro-L can be used to increase metabolism and help with weight loss. Hypothyroidism is rare in horses, so this medication should be discontinued once the appropriate body condition is achieved.
- Supplements
 - Metabarol is a supplement that can reduce insulin insensitivity
 - Lamina Saver is a supplement that is often helpful for the management and prevention of laminitis as well as helping to increase sole depth and overall hoof health