



February 2018

Issue #3

VIP NEWS

Unlocking your horses potential from the inside out



Equitana, a first for New Zealand and great success for VANI

Here at VANI we had a very exciting end to 2017, exhibiting and being invited to present at the first ever Equitana at the ASB Showgrounds in Auckland. We had a great time, and attracted great numbers for our interactive workshops. We had ticket and prize giveaways throughout the week. Keep an eye on Facebook for more giveaways this summer.

This month we talk about our ever changing pasture and how to effectively manage your horse at pasture during different times of the year.

We are also out and about a lot the next few months seeing clients before we head away again to Horse of the Year in March.

Seminars and Workshops have been really popular over the last few months. If you would like VANI to hold a workshop or seminar in your area please let us know.

1

PACKAGES

We have a range of veterinary and nutritional packages to suit everyone.

2

FARM VISITS

VANI specialises in on farm consultations where we come to you and address your horses requirements

3

PRESCRIPTION DIETS

VANI can create a perfectly balanced diet based on your horses individual requirements

Title of topic of the month

What feed's in your paddock and is it right for YOUR horse. Read more on pages 2-3.

Sign up to receive our newsletter every month

It's easy just sign up online, on Facebook or flick us an email with your details and we'll add you to the list.

Send us your favourite pics of your horse and you might just feature in our next newsletter!

Tell us what you want to know, we'd love to hear from you

We would love to know what you would like to hear about in an upcoming newsletter. So drop us a line on [Facebook](#) and your topic might just pop up next month.

Pasture, the feed we use most but know the least about!



Nikita Stowers - Equine Nutritionist MSc BSc BBS

In the feed room with Nikita

Having just arrived back from the UK, this past winter you could have sworn we were in Ireland or Scotland with the amount of rain we had, yet come December, anyone that was relying on green or any sort of grass to feed their horses could be seen doing rain dances in the paddock. The thing about weather is that it majorly influences what nutrients are in our grass and therefore what our horses diet consists of. Winter pasture is very different to that of summer pasture and the same goes for Spring and Autumn. So how do we manage our horses diet year round while our grass is busy changing? First of all by knowing what is in your paddock at any one time is useful. This applies to grass types but also how much grass is available. Most commonly, our pastures in New Zealand are predominantly made up of Rye Grass and Clover. This is because many of our horse properties lie on old dairy farms. There are other pastures that are likely to be present as well, including Timothy, Broom, Brown grass and Prairie grass. Pasture is highest in soluble carbohydrates (we'll call them sugars to make it more simple) in spring, followed by autumn and is lower in winter and summer. Sugar levels can also fluctuate throughout the day, and so do our horses and ponies grazing patterns so it's not always as easy as turning your horse out when the levels are lowest and keeping them off pasture when the levels are at their peak.

There is a lot of talk about grass sensitivity in horses and there is a lot we are still to learn about how the different nutrients in the grass react with both the horse and each other. Some horses are certainly more prone to reacting to the grass than others. Two things we know can have a negative effect on our horses behaviour are sugars and mycotoxins. As we mentioned, we typically see high sugar levels in the spring or autumn, but also watch out for high sugar levels when we get some rain after a dry spell. You may not need to remove pasture from

your horses diet, but instead manage your other feeds when you know sugar levels in the pasture are high.

Mycotoxins are a different story but result in similar symptoms for the horse. Keep in mind your horse may be dealing with mycotoxins and high sugar levels at the same time. Mycotoxins seem to be well managed with mycotoxin binders and there are various different binder products on the market. Examples of these are Equiguard, Nubind and Mycosorb.

If you have horses or ponies that are prone to laminitis, it may be safest to keep your horse off pasture during high risk periods (e.g. Spring and Autumn or whenever the pasture is rapidly growing). If you can't keep your horse off pasture altogether, graze them very early in the morning only if possible, when the sugar levels are their lowest. The type of pasture (i.e., pasture species) you have in your paddocks will also have an impact on how safe it is for your horse.

Whilst too much grass can be a problem for some horses, so too is not enough grass and equally we need to make sure we are topping up their diet when pasture quality or quantity is low. Horses need to consume at least 1.5% of their body weight in feed per day and generally at least 1% in forage. When pasture is limited this needs to be topped up, not only to meet their requirements for energy, growth and performance but to keep their gut healthy. For an average 500kg horse this equates to at least 5kg of forage per day. Keep this in mind when assessing if your horse is getting enough feed per day. This becomes particularly important when we are keeping horses off grass.

Concerned and Confused? Don't worry, VANI can visit you and assess things like pasture quality and suitability and we can even have your pasture tested for sugar and nutrient levels at different times of the year to give us a picture of how your pasture can be safely incorporated into your horses diet. We can also help you with a regressing programme to incorporate lower sugar (horse safe) grasses such as Timothy and Cocksfoot into your pastures. We also have a number of diet evaluation packages available online www.vani.nz/packages. Ask us which package is right for you.



What about the selenium in my pasture and feeds, can my veterinarian or nutritionist help?

Vets corner with Petra

Dr. Petra Hazlitt BVSc BSc



Selenium is one of the few nutrients that can be assessed when testing both the horse (through blood testing) and pasture and feed. Selenium is an essential trace mineral required by many body systems in the horse. It is an essential component of the enzyme glutathione peroxidase. This is one of the body's natural anti-oxidants which together with Vitamin E protects the cells from damage.

Selenium plays a role in muscle integrity and can help prevent tying up in some horses. It also plays a role in the immune system and in fertility.

Too little selenium...

The tricky thing about selenium is the dose. Too little selenium and your horse will not be performing at an optimal level. It is thought around 30% of horses in New Zealand are deficient in Selenium.

You may notice early signs relating to the horses muscular system such as:

- ✓ A negativity towards being ridden or worked
- ✓ Over reactive to stimuli
- ✓ "Hot" and hard to work with
- ✓ Muscle inflammation

The result of inadequate antioxidant levels can be:

- ✓ Sore and stiff after work
- ✓ Prone to infections
- ✓ More prone to tying up

Changes can also be seen in the external appearance of the horse such as poor hair coat quality. Selenium is also a reason for poor fertility.

Too much selenium...

High levels of selenium are extremely toxic and selenium has a narrow safety margin. For example, horses typically require 1-3mg of selenium daily and even 2 times this over a long period could cause chronic poisoning. Early warning signs include:

You may notice early signs relating to the horses muscular system such as:

- ✓ Gradual weight loss
- ✓ Loss of hair from the mane and tail
- ✓ Breaks in the hoof wall at the coronary bands
- ✓ Acute cases of toxicity affect most body systems and often result in death.

Do I need to supplement?

Selenium is naturally available in the soil so horses at pasture will obtain some this way but unfortunately New Zealand soils are characteristically very low and resulting selenium levels in the pasture are variable.

Our advice is not to supplement your diet with selenium unless you have a blood test and ideally pasture analysis to go with this. This will then give you an idea of what your horse should be getting through their diet and what is showing up in their body. Depending on your horses initial level, this may need to be repeated a couple of times a year until levels are stable. We recommend all clients to get their horses blood levels checked yearly, even where their levels are stable. Both blood and pasture testing is inexpensive and the cost far outweighs the risks of just guessing how much selenium your horse requires. Supplements can be in the form of an inorganic liquid form or an organic chelated form. Depending on your horses level, your veterinarian or VANI can recommend the best option and dose rate for your horse.



OUT AND ABOUT WITH VANI

Get in touch with us to catch up at one of these events

November - December 2017

23rd-26th November - VANI had a great time at the first ever Equitana to be held in New Zealand at the ASB Showgrounds in Auckland. We held two interactive workshops where we talked about both general feed management and gastric ulceration which proved to be a real hit! If you missed it don't worry, get in touch with us and we may be able to hold a workshop in your area sometime soon.

January - March 2018

29th-31st January - Nikita will be at the National Thoroughbred Yearling Sales in Karaka. If you would like a farm visit this week in the Auckland area please let us know.

If you would like a farm visit in January to March please get in touch with us. We are out and about in both the Waikato and Auckland this month. If you live further afield not to worry let us know and we can probably still visit before we head away to HOY.

13th-18th March - Horse of the Year 2018. Once again VANI are so excited to be at HOY. We are still on the premier arena but have moved sites and are now at site **E15** so come and see us for 20% off all products and services. Keep an eye on our Facebook page @vaniequine for HOY giveaways.



Coming up next time

Next time we talk about a very popular topic, building topline. Sign up to become a VANI VIP [here](#) and receive our next newsletter automatically in June!

GET IN TOUCH WITH US

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