

## Overweight Horses



This year, given our mild, wet summer & autumn months, many of 'good doers' are coming into winter overweight.

It is of paramount importance that these horses/ponies do not come out of Winter carrying even more weight! We want these horses to have achieved a 'normal body condition score' prior to turn out on Spring grass. Overweight equids should ideally be fed good quality hay as this is less calorific than haylage.

We should aim to feed 1.5% of body weight in kilograms of hay, weighed dry, per day. Hay can be soaked for ideally 8-12 hours before feeding to reduce the non-structural carbohydrate load. If feeding soaked hay, a low-calorie vitamin/mineral balancer should also be fed. Remember any dietary changes should be made gradually over a 2-week period to try prevent gastrointestinal upset. Furthermore, overweight horses/ponies should not be over-rugged. Unclipped, overweight horses/ponies not in work, do not need rugging!

On the flip side of the coin some horses, especially our older patients, can struggle to maintain condition in winter. These patients should have regular dental checks performed as well as being subscribed to a veterinary devised worming programme.

Furthermore, such patients benefit from an increased plane of nutrition as well as adequate rugging. Blood tests including 'Cushing's' bloods should also be considered in such patients.

If you're worried about your horse's weight, please [contact us](#).