

Feeding Regimen for Fell Ponies

The basic feeding regimen for Fell ponies is:

- Pasture
- Hay (grass only)
- Vitamin supplement
- Free-choice minerals
- Digestible energy rarely and only as needed
- Probiotics

Here, both our pastures and grass hay are of superior quality, and the ponies must be limited in their intake. In winter when the pas-

A dry-lot is indispensable for keeping ponies fit and in good flesh.

tures are deep in snow, I feed grass hay four to five times per day. The ponies are on pasture for part days in the summer and for full days in the fall. I have found a dry-lot to be indispensable for keeping these ponies fit and in good flesh when not on pasture. I supplement both the hay and the pasture with a vitamin supplement and free-choice minerals. Young ponies often require supplemental digestible energy while older ponies rarely do. Weekly probiotics help keep the ponies' intestinal flora balanced.



Guidelines for Feeding Fell Ponies

Retaining the characteristics that have made these ponies unique is crucial to a Fell Pony feeding program. The feeding regimen outlined here best mimics the Fells' ancestral home in my environment. Adjustments based on your environment and feed availability will be required. However, frequent feedings, minimal use of prepared feeds (including grain), minerals in a form that mimics nature, and maximum use of pasture and grass hay are fundamental. When hay is fed, it should be fed on the ground—never in feeders—to emulate grazing. Minerals, including salt, should be provided loose—never in blocks—to emulate natural rock outcrops utilized by equines in the wild. Minerals should be provided free-choice so that the ponies can use what they need when they need it. Following these basic guidelines will ensure that this rare breed of British pony survives and thrives in the future.

For more information on vitamin, mineral, probiotic and digestible energy supplements, please see the brochures "Dynamite Basics for Fell Ponies" and "Special Dynamite Products for Fell Ponies"

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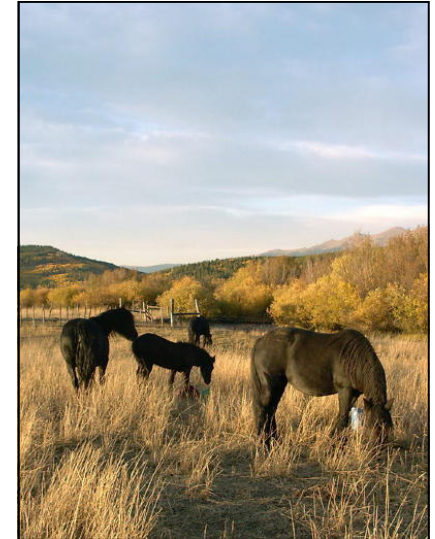
Feeding Fell Ponies

Vitamins

Roughage

Energy

Minerals



Hay

Pasture

Supplements

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Introduction to Feeding Fell Ponies

After nearly a decade of feeding ponies, I have learned that feeding Fell Ponies is a complicated topic that can be made quite simple.

Fell Ponies are one of Britain's oldest and purest native pony breeds. They hail from the northern border country between Scotland and England and take their name from a local word for 'hill.' Like all the native ponies, the character of Fell Ponies has been shaped by centuries of living in their home climate and terrain.

The steep fells have coarse and varied vegetation, so the ponies have evolved to make due with diverse but often poor forage. At the same time, the ponies have vast acreages over which they can roam to meet their nu-

Raising Fell Ponies away from their native home provides a special challenge to us as owners.

tritional requirements. Raising Fells away from their native home requires owners to mimic their ancestral situation in order to retain their unique characteristics and enable this rare breed to not just survive but thrive.

Basics of Pony Nutrition

The most important part of feeding is developing an eye for a pony's physical condition, so that one can tell when a pony needs more, when they need less, and when they need something different. An

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owner's eye is especially important because, according to Dr. Paul Siciliano, Equine Nutrition specialist at Colorado State University's Equine Science Center, there is no research on how to feed ponies (there is research on horses, however).

While there is no research on ponies, there are some basic ideas that apply to feeding all equines. They all need roughage, digestible energy, and vitamins and minerals. Most often, roughage is fed as grazing or hay, digestible energy is fed as grain, and then some vitamin and mineral supplement is fed in some form. Of course, hay has some digestible energy and some vitamins and minerals, and whole grain has a small amount of roughage and some vitamins and minerals. Depending on the form in which the vitamins and minerals are fed,

An individual equine's requirements change based on weather, exercise/work, age, and housing/keep.

they could also include some roughage and some digestible energy.

A feeding program must balance the four basics. An owner's "eye" is the most important tool since no two equines have exactly the same requirements for the four basics. The eye is also important

The owner's eye is the most important tool for ensuring a pony's health.

because an individual equine's requirements change based on weather, exercise/work, age, and housing/keep (i.e. stalled versus paddock, dry lot versus pasture).

How a pony's nutritional needs are met will differ from farm to farm, state to state, and owner to owner. Climate, use, and hay and pasture quality are just a few of the elements that vary from place to place. Therefore it's imperative that a pony's owner understand what basics are required and then discover how to best meet those requirements and possibly supplement them in their situation.

