Horse Corral

How to "Treat" Your Horse

By Alex Valverde, Equine Advocates Communications Manager

Horses and other equines have a delicate and complicated digestive system, which is why a proper diet is so integral to their well-being. Two things of note are important to remember:

1) Horses cannot vomit, so if they are given poor-quality food or something that upsets their stomach, they cannot regurgitate it. This can lead to serious health issues.

2) Of all domestic animals, horses have the smallest stomachs in relation to their body size, so they shouldn't eat a large amount of food in a short amount of time. Ideally, they should eat many small meals throughout the day with a majority forage-based diet. These details don't mean your horse can't indulge in treats, but it's important to know which foods are safe and not safe, and why.

Safe Foods for Horses

In addition to commercially available horse treats, there are a variety of foods that horses can safely eat in small quantities. Safe fruits include bananas, grapes, apples and pears without the core, mango, oranges, strawberries, watermelon, apricots and peaches without the stone, and pineapple. Safe vegetables include carrots, celery, lettuce, pumpkin, cucumber, and snow peas. Other safe foods are peppermints, molasses, oatmeal, raisins, peanut butter, and sunflower seeds.

A fun way to keep horses cool and encourage water intake during the hot summer months is to create horse-friendly popsicles using water and safe fruits and vegetables.

Unsafe Foods for Horses

Avocado, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, garlic, kale, onions, tomatoes, and potatoes are not safe foods for horses. Tomatoes, eggplant, pepper, and potatoes should be avoided as they are part of the nightshade family, making them toxic to horses. (However, sweet potatoes are not a part of the nightshade family and are safe.) Cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, cabbage, broccoli, and kale contain a type of sugar called raffinose, which causes discomfort and intestinal gas in horses.

Additionally, horses shouldn't eat dairy products, meats, bread, or chocolate. Horses are herbivores, so their digestive systems are not built to eat dairy and meat. As for bread, wheat is deficient in vitamins A, D, and E, which are nutrients that are essential in a horse's diet. Bread is also high in starch, so if your horse has Equine Metabolic Syndrome or insulin resistance, it can cause laminitis and founder. And just like cats and dogs, horses can't have chocolate because it contains theobromine, which is toxic to horses. A large amount or even small amounts over time over time can lead to serious health issues, including heart problems and nervous system dysfunction.

Just like us, horses like certain flavors, so have fun offering new foods and seeing what they enjoy. It's also good to feed treats in moderation, even with safe foods. This way you can still show your favorite equine some love while making sure they remain healthy.

Photo of Beau, a Thoroughbred, enjoying some hay.

EQUINE ADVOCATES

Equine Advocates Rescue & Sanctuary
3212 State Route 66, Chatham, NY

2024 OPEN DAY SCHEDULE

11:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Sunday, May 5
Saturday, June 8
Saturday, July 13
Saturday, August 17
Saturday, September 14
Saturday, October 12
Sunday, November 3

Come spend a few hours walking around and meeting our horses, ponies, donkeys and mules, most of whom were rescued from abuse, neglect and/or slaughter. Also, you will have the opportunity to meet our six retired veteran military horses from the Caisson Platoon at Arlington National Cemetery. All are happily enjoying their life here at the sanctuary.

We have graphics posted at each paddock so you can learn about various equin animal care tips and why they needed to be rescued. This helps make your visit a much more personal and educational experience!

Please feel free to photo at our panel and enjoy one of the most beautiful and serene spots here at the sanctuary.

Please note that all visitors will need to sign a release form upon arrival. Some We pets permitted. Admission is free, but we do ask that you please consider making a tax-deductible donation. Also, on your visit, learn about our Equine Sponsorship and Monthly Giving Plan.

Equine Advocates is a non-profit 501(c)(3) equine protection/charitable organization founded in 1996. Our Mission Statement is "To rescue, protect and provide the place of equine through education, investigations, rescue operations, fact dissemination of information to the public and the operation of a farm sanctuary for daughter-hoard, abused and neglected equines."

Photos: Marilyn A Hess, except Mule by Melissa Jacobs (L) and Donkey, except ABM Equine Rescue by Marie Wood (R)

Berkshire Humane Society
214 Barker Rd, Pittsfield, MA 01201
Phone: (413) 447-7878, Berkshirehumane.org

This bright green-eyed, 2-year-old beauty is **Essie**. Essie is here along with her brother Derbie due to allergies in their most recent home. Essie and Derbie have lived with adults only and have been strictly indoor-only kitties. They are a very shy pair who will take time to warm up to new surroundings, so they'll need patient adopters willing to provide them time to adjust and acclimate. If you have room in your heart and home for these bonded siblings, please reach out to the feline staff at Berkshire Humane Society today. They can be adopted together through the shelter's Buddy Program.

This handsome 2-year-old fellow is **Derbie**. Derbie is here along with his sister Essie due to allergies in their most recent home. They are both extremely shy, and would do best in a quiet, adult-only home as they've never lived with children or other pets. Derbie is described as a lap cat and enjoys being pet. He'll require routine grooming for his beautiful, long hair. Because he and Essie are bonded and enjoy each other's company, they'll be required to be adopted through Berkshire Humane Society's Buddy program. If you have the time and love to provide this quiet pair, please reach out to the Berkshire Humane feline staff for more information on how to adopt them.