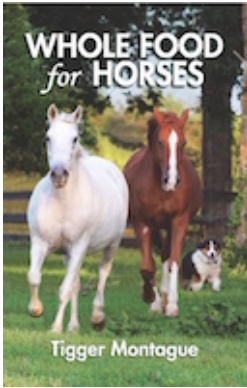


WHOLE FOOD *for* HORSES



Tigger Montague



At last, a book that clears up the confusion about feeding a whole food diet to horses! Veteran horse nutrition expert Tigger Montague has created a must-have resource for every horse owner, packed with easy-to-follow, practical information on: understanding basic principles of a whole food diet; a complete breakdown of all essential whole food components; foods for specific issues such as recovery, immunity, GI tract health, performance, metabolic imbalances and allergies; ways to improve soil and pastures; understanding ingredients in commercial equine feeds; understanding chemicals in commercial equine shampoos and cleaners and why your horse may be sensitive to them; complete sample diets for easy and hard keepers, heavy and light work horses, seniors and more!

Tigger Montague has spent most of her life with horses. From riding ponies as a child, to training and competing in eventing and dressage as an adult, her passion for horses and animals has been a lifelong dedication. With over 30 years in the nutrition business, both human and equine, she combines her experience with deep investigation of both the science and the philosophies of food and nutrition. Her company, BioStarUS, has pioneered the formulation and production of whole, non-GMO, raw food supplements for horses and dogs.

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Where's the Food?

One summer afternoon in 2008, I put on my reading glasses and walked into the feed room to conduct a little research. Like most horse owners, I trusted the feed companies that I purchased from. I believed their R&D departments full of Ph.D. nutritionists, the marketing of their science, and their repetitive messaging that horse owners are not capable of feeding their own horses without either commercial feeds or an advanced degree in equine nutrition.

The only part of a feed label I had ever paid attention to before was the "guaranteed analysis" part; specifically, I studied the protein, fat, and mineral ratios. I didn't pay so much attention to fiber content, since I figured that with hay and pasture, the horses had plenty of fiber in their diets. Most of my feed-buying decisions simply focused on the percentage of protein and the percentage of fat listed on the label.

This particular afternoon, in the feed room, I pushed my reading glasses up the bridge of my nose and started reading the actual ingredients:

...processed grain by-products, roughage products, grain products, plant protein products, molasses products, forage products, soybean oil, calcium carbonate, lignin sulfonate, salt, L-lysine, DL-methionine, vitamin E supplement, iron oxide, anise flavor, fenugreek flavor, choline chloride, copper sulfate, zinc oxide, vitamin B12 supplement, riboflavin supplement, calcium pantothenate, niacin supplement, vitamin A supplement, calcium iodate, magnesium oxide, cobalt

carbonate, vitamin D3 supplement, ferrous carbonate, manganous oxide, sodium selenite...

The first words out of my mouth: "Where's the *food*?"

I read the label again, thinking surely I had missed something...but no. This nationally known brand had no real food in their feed. I remembered what feed used to look like—whole oats, barley, corn, sometimes mixed with molasses—and the feed mills, the sweet smell of oats in burlap sack bags. No fancy names, no million-dollar marketing campaigns. I wandered back out of the feed room and into the bright sunshine with that woozy, sick feeling, thinking, *Now that I know, how can I feed this? And what would I feed instead?*

The Search

Surely there had to be a commercial feed option out there that provided whole, real food. I knew I would have to compromise on some ingredients, like the inorganic forms of certain minerals—the oxides and carbonates—and I knew I would have to break from my whole food paradigm on vitamins, settling for those made from and processed with petroleum extracts, coal tar, and acetate. But about all the rest of the ingredients, I was hopeful.

I started roaming feed stores like an industrial spy, jotting down ingredients in a notepad, puzzling over some that I couldn't even pronounce: *ethylenediamine dihydroiodide, menadione sodium bisulfite complex, and sodium sesquicarbonate*. All I needed was a secret decoder ring. At least, in the stores, the labels were there to read. When I searched online and visited corporate websites to seek out whole food feeds, I commonly ran into the strange resistance of

companies that were unwilling to list their ingredients at all. What were they afraid of?

Around this time, I stumbled across an old, recently reprinted volume called *The Stable Book: A Treatise on the Management of Horses*, written by veterinarian John Stewart and first published in 1858. Stewart's chapters on feeding horses outlined the different ingredients fed around the world at the time: rye bread in Germany, potatoes in Ireland, turnips in England, pumpkin and squash in the U.S., dates and camel milk in Arabia, and fish in India. His feeding recommendations were focused on the amount of work a horse did, and ranged from cavalry horses to cart horses to carriage horses. All of it was just as fascinating as it was potentially useful, even 150 years later.

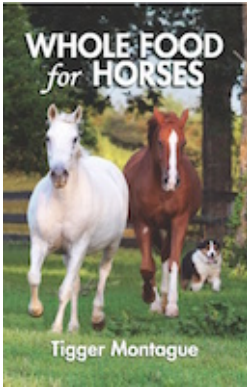
I recognized that I needed to put together my own whole food feed plan.

So, in my quest for home-made whole-food feed, I started at square one: fiber. I used beet pulp as a base. (Note that this was before genetically modified sugar beets took over the market—more on that development later.) Next, I added oats for protein and carbohydrate energy, flax seeds for omega-3 fatty acids and other fats, and soaked alfalfa cubes for additional protein, fiber, and calcium. All of this I rounded out with some brewer's yeast for the B-vitamins, spirulina for the macro- and microminerals, and sunflower seeds for vitamin E.

The horses loved it. And within a few weeks of eating this new diet, they looked better. Even though they had looked fine on the commercial complete feed, something profound had happened internally. Much later, I would come to understand that feeding a simple whole food diet puts less stress on the GI tract and the body system at large.

Over time, I experimented with other food ingredients: low-arsenic rice bran, barley, timothy pellets, chia seeds, coconut meal, coconut oil, hemp oil and seeds, and ground almonds, along with various foods I could mix in to give more variety, like kale, oranges, kiwis, papaya, strawberries, blueberries, mangos, pomegranates, and cabbage. Many of BioStar's first formulas were born from testing each ingredient on my herd at home. One of the greatest advantages to feeding a whole food diet, is that it allows for full customization—a kind of mindfulness about feeding. It allows us to adjust quantities based on the caloric and energy needs of each horse, and it can be adjusted to the metabolism of each individual animal.

I could have easily called my approach "Our Ancestors' Diet for Horses," but instead I called it "The Whole Food Diet," because I felt it was so important to distinctly separate this diet from commercial, convenient, processed feeds. Feeding horses does not require advanced degrees in nutrition, and never has. The cornerstones of the equine diet are fiber, protein, carbohydrates and fat, just the same as they were in our ancestors' day, and the best way to supply these four elements of nutrition is with good hay, pasture, and real food.



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