

Nutritional Notes

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Question: I currently mix two different types of feed together, is this a good idea or not? Many people tell me that I unbalance the ration by doing this.

Answer: You are not alone, there are a number of horse owners that do this, but rarely is it necessary. Some reasons are “I’ve always done it this way;” “In my barn I use this feed and this horse came from a different barn on this other feed so I mix them;” “I’m trying to add calories;” “I’m trying to reduce calories;” or anything in between. If you select the right feed for the required purpose, mixing should not be required. Most all feeds are balanced with vitamins and minerals for the intended use and feeding directions, so mixing two different feeds will not have a significant impact on vitamin or mineral intake. However, mixing feeds with non-feeds, such as oats or beet pulp, does have the potential to upset vitamin and mineral balance and total intake. I like simple, so I would want a feed to use that requires very little in the way of mixing or alteration to the diet I choose. So think about your feeding goals, if you want to add calories, choose a feed with a higher fat or calorie content before you add a fat supplement. If you supplement additional vitamins and minerals, choose a low feeding rate diet or pasture balancer type feed where those nutrients are added at a higher level. If you mix a 10 percent feed and a 14 percent feed to get a 12 percent protein feed, just buy a 12 percent protein feed. With so many options on the market today, having to mix feeds becomes unnecessary. Feeding is not that difficult, but figuring out what to feed can be confusing.

To submit a question of your own, visit Pony Club's [Nutritional Notes](#) page.