

Grasses associated with calcium and phosphorus deficiencies

with Dr Jennifer Stewart



Grasses associated with calcium and phosphorus deficiencies, osteoporosis, osteodystrophia fibrosa (ODF), nutritional secondary hyperparathyroidism (NSH) and 'bighead'

Grasses with an oxalate content greater than 0.5% are hazardous



Buffel grass *Cenchrus ciliaris* [Poaceae]: 1.8 to 6.5% oxalate



Setaria (pigeon grass) *Setaria sphacelata* [Poaceae]: 1.37 to 7.8% oxalate



Pangola grass *Digitaria eriantha* ssp. *pentzii* (formerly known as *Digitaria decumbens*) [Poaceae]: 0.9 to 1.8% oxalate



Guinea grass *Panicum maximum* [Poaceae]: 0.6 to 2.4% oxalate



Kikuyu *Pennisetum clandestinum* [Poaceae]: 0.8 to 3.4% oxalate



Para grass *Brachiaria mutica* (also known as *Urochloa mutica* & *Panicum muticum*) [Poaceae]: 0.85 to 1.68% oxalate



Signal grass *Brachiaria decumbens* [Poaceae]: 0.9 to 1.3% oxalate



Purple pigeon grass *Setaria incrassata* [Poaceae] 0.67 to 1.9% oxalate

Note: 'Bighead' is the end-stage of NSH and does not occur in all horses. Symptoms of calcium & phosphorus deficiencies include:

1. the first symptom is usually lameness, an insidious shifting lameness, general tenderness of the joints & a stiff, stilted gait.
2. ill thrift, weight loss & a rough coat may occur, some horses prefer to lie down
3. some horses have muscular weakness & prefer to canter rather than trot
4. spontaneous avulsion of ligaments & spontaneous fractures can occur
5. pica (dirt eating), chewing problems (due to loosening of the teeth) can occur




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 Dr Jen Stewart has been an equine veterinarian for more than 40 years & an equine nutritionist for more than 10 years. Jen has been developing premium formulas for studs, trainers & feed companies in Australia & around the world & regularly consults to leading international studs & trainers in various countries. Jen has spent a fair bit of time researching & being involved in nutritional management of developmental orthopedic diseases, colic, tying-up, laminitis, performance problems, post-surgery & other conditions. & is currently the only practicing equine veterinarian & clinical nutritionist in Australia.
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