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the BEF Futurity



# feeding yearlings, 2 & 3 year olds



Growing youngsters are not always easy to keep looking at their best but, with a little care and attention to their diet and management, we can ensure they look well, while still supporting steady, even growth.

Common practice with this age group is for them to be living out with little or no hard feed. Their diet is generally, therefore, deficient in nutrients, including all-important protein, which supplies key essential amino acids for muscle and tissue development. As a result, these youngsters often have a weak top line and poor muscle development yet many may be overweight and, depending on forage quality, may have a "hay belly" appearance.

## Yearlings (12 - 24 months of age)

At 12 months of age, the typical yearling should have achieved approximately 85 -90% of its mature height, 95% of its bone length and approximately 65% of its adult weight. Growth rates may now be slowing (0.45 - 0.5kg per day) but it is still an important phase in the young athlete's life. By 18 months, approximately 80% of adult weight will have been achieved and, at 24 months of age, 85 - 90% of adult weight will have been achieved, with average daily weight gain now as low as 0.2kg per day.

### NUTRITIONAL OBJECTIVES

- To provide a diet that is formulated to support continued musculo-skeletal development, whilst avoiding any exaggerated compensatory growth periods, which is of particular importance for youngsters who may have had less than ideal diets as foals.
- Yearlings must not be allowed to get too fat and heavy but still need to build good muscle and top line to support overall development.
- The diet must supply the essential quality protein and micronutrients to support growth, while meeting calorie requirements to promote or maintain condition.



## Preparing for the Futurity Evaluations, show or sales ring

- Start your preparation as soon as possible, at least 8 weeks prior to the event.
- Ensure that the diet is fully balanced and meeting nutritional requirements, aiming for muscle tone, top line and ribs that you may not see but can certainly feel.
- For individuals who are holding their weight too well, feeding a low calorie balancer is better than giving no feed at all and management of forage and time at pasture will also be key to keeping waistlines in check.
- For those living out and who are holding too much weight, time at pasture may need to be reduced, especially if grass is plentiful. Strip grazing may be necessary - even substituting grass with a lower calorie hay/haylage.
- Assess your forage. Soft, digestible hay or haylage is preferable to stalky, mature forage, which is less easy to digest and can give rise to a “hay belly” appearance.
- Weighttape on a weekly or fortnightly basis and make a note of bodyweight to spot any upward or downward trends.

## Two and Three-Year-Olds (24 to 48 months of age)

The normal growing two-year-old will by now have reached 90% of their mature bodyweight and, by 36 months, 95%, but when does a horse stop growing? Maturity of bone and wither height may be achieved sooner than mature bodyweight, therefore, at 2 – 3 years of age your horse will still be growing but is doing so very slowly.

### NUTRITIONAL OBJECTIVES

- As they grow older, youngsters’ nutrient requirements decline but the aim is still to provide a diet to support a healthy musculo-skeletal structure as well as meeting the needs for maintenance and even the nutritional requirements of any exercise or training the youngster might be involved with at this stage.
- The key to achieving excellent physique is to provide the correct nutritional balance to support growth and development while meeting an individual’s calorie requirements.

## WHAT TO FEED - all ages

The quality of the forage available (grass, hay or haylage) will determine the amount of additional calories required in the diet.

- For those holding weight and condition well on a forage-only diet, Baileys Stud Balancer is ideal for providing essential supporting nutrients without additional calories.
- If the forage is not of sufficient quality, the recommended amount of Stud & Youngstock Mix or Cubes will provide the necessary additional calories along with quality protein, vitamins and minerals. Prep Mix or Yearling Cubes are ideal for those prone to excitability as are both non-heating with a good oil content for slow release energy and a shiny coat.
- All Baileys stud feeds are designed to be fed in combination, if necessary. This means that, if your youngster doesn’t need the full recommended amount of mix or cubes to maintain condition, you can top up the diet with Stud Balancer to ensure that nutrient levels are optimum and balanced, without overfeeding calories.



For further information or a practical and individual diet for your horse, contact one of Baileys Nutrition team on:  
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