



## Feeding the show horse & pony

Over the next few weeks, with the start of the show season, open any magazine and there will be photo after photo of winners in the show ring. What do these horses have in common? Easy. A high percentage of them are overweight with a high percentage of those being obese; a true welfare issue.

Why are so many show horses overweight? Certainly 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder' but are judges and breeders so misled to believe that horses are healthy and beautiful looking like this? Perhaps the extra fat is mistaken for muscle. What ever the reason, it really is time to call a halt to obesity in the show ring.

Overweight horses are not healthy horses. The extra fat makes normal breathing difficult meaning that a fat horse will never be a fit horse and the extra weight puts an enormous strain on the spine and the joints (even more so if the rider is overweight too). This is particularly the case for young horses and the incidence of Osteochondrosis, Developmental Orthopaedic Disease and laminitis in young horses, particularly warm bloods and natives is relatively common due to forcing growth by feeding excess concentrates, particularly high starch diets.

**Hickstead Horse Feeds** solution to producing a healthy show horse:

- Forget stuffing the pony full of showing rations. All native ponies should be fed **Hickstead Hi Fibre Cubes**. The Hi Fibre Cubes contain super fibres, promoting high digestible fibre, providing the pony with stamina energy. The high fibre content of 19% keeps the gut healthy and because the fibre sources are digestible, there will be no evidence of a hay or grass belly. The protein content of 10.5% will be adequate for promoting top-line and the addition of a cup of soya or corn oil spread over two or three feeds will improve body and coat condition without promoting obesity or sending the pony 'over the top'. This ration will be suitable for M&M, leading rein and show or working hunter ponies.
- For ponies needing a little more energy, **Hickstead Herbal Meadow Mix** will provide 'sparkle without fizz' This low energy condition mix includes herbs for health and to encourage fussy eaters with micronised flaked soya to promote correct muscle development.
- **Hickstead Horse Feeds** conditioning range comprise simply of **Condition Mix and Condition Cubes**. These products do not need to be fed in excess as they will put weight on the horse, but in order to boost show ring performance, top-line and muscle definition they are perfect products. Along with the cooked flaked soya and added soya oil, the benefits of which have been outlined above, 'super fibres' have been added for controllable energy,



**Hickstead Condition Mix** also contains alfalfa chaff to maintain a stable gut and encourage mastication, raising the fibre content to a healthy 10.5%.

- **Hickstead Condition Cubes** have the added benefit of unmolassed sugar beet shreds incorporated within the ration; an excellent way to help achieve perfect bodyweight without excess starch in the diet which can radically alter show manners.

To find out more about **Hickstead Horse Feeds** and their range of feeds, or for friendly, professional feeding advice, phone 0845 0250 444.