

COLIC PREVENTION

Identify and Remove the Cause if Possible:

- **Supply fresh, clean water** at all times.
- Feed a **high (digestible) fibre diet** to stabilise microbial population in the large intestine and satisfy fibre desire.
- **Reduce starch intake.** Do not feed large meals of oats or cereals.
- Employ a **suitable anti-parasitic programme** to reduce parasite burden safely.
- **Regular dental checks** are important to ensure that teeth are in good working order so that the horse can grind and chew food adequately.
- **Remove feed from sandy surfaces.** Monitor faeces for sand.
- **Do not feed immediately after exercise** as blood flow is diverted to the gut for nutrient absorption. This reduced blood flow (oxygen) to working muscles and premature fatigue will result. Allow horse to cool and resume normal resting heart rate and temperature.
- **Do not feed 'meals' immediately before exercise.** Glucose peaks 1-3 hours post feeding (Harris, 1999), so insulin response will cause a drop in blood glucose, leading to early fatigue.
- **Introduce new feed slowly** to encourage appropriate bacterial population and allow intestine to adapt. Ensure that all feed material is clean and free from mould and dust.
- **Keep all forms of stress to a minimum.** Remember that the modern equine lifestyle enforced by 'man' is alien to the horse as a species. Try to employ appropriate nutrition and management that meets his natural, evolved requirements.