

Linda Brings you up to date with the current views on the subjects that matter most to us all, the well being of our horses.

Linda will also offer responses to FAQ's on dietary & feed related disorders-including how to prevent them in the first place!

Interesting case studies will be featured along with situations that have been successfully managed by Linda and Total Horse feed.



“Gulliver’s Travels” A story of Hope, Care and rehabilitation.... Managed by Linda and Total™



Gulliver’s Travels is a 16.2hh thoroughbred racehorse, who was referred to us after suffering weight loss and

inappetance after entering race training in 2003. After a short period in training he returned to his owner in very poor condition. He was unable to eat any reasonable quantity of feed and appeared to be – in his owner’s words “a mentally broken horse”. After veterinary investigation, it was discovered that Gulliver had severe gastric ulceration (EGUS – see gastric ulceration article), along with other abnormalities in both the small and large intestine. Prognosis was poor.

However, Gulliver was one of the lucky ones; he had a ‘hands on’ progressive owner who decided to give Gulliver a second chance and

began investigation into possible alternative and holistic therapies. This is where we came in to advise on a suitable diet that would not only enhance recovery, but more importantly prevent further digestive disturbance.

Gulliver was subsequently put onto a diet of Total™ horse feed and Chinese herbs, and slowly but surely he began his long road to recovery. His previous, regular bouts of colic ceased and his demeanour began to improve.

In fact, Gulliver not only made a full recovery, but also went back into race training – on Total™ horse feed.

He has since been awarded ‘best conditioned horse’ at a race meeting and became the lead horse for the trainer on the gallops.

Epilogue

We at Primero are proud to say that he is still fed on Total as he was during convalescence, through recovery, into race training, racing and beyond.

As you can see, he is a gorgeous boy and we wish him a long, healthy life and career ahead.



What caused Gulliver to suffer this condition in the first place?

Linda's view . . .

Even though Gulliver (and thousands like him) race for a living, they evolved with the same gastrointestinal system as all horses which was designed to primarily digest fibrous foliage as opposed to a diet high in water soluble carbohydrates such as cereal starch. Add an intense, stressful management regime & insufficient forage and it is no surprise that over 90% of racehorses studied suffer from gastric ulceration to some degree.

How to avoid this in the future.

Prevention is always better than cure

When feeding race horses or other elite sports horses, it is important not to lose sight of the basic, fundamental, digestive needs of the horse. Many owners and trainers focus too much on energy requirement but need to address fibre first.

Unlike humans, horses continually secrete gastric acid which is suited to their natural trickle feeding pattern, where they would be continually eating small amounts of fibrous foliage. Mastication, the mechanical process of breaking down food in the mouth, results in the production of saliva, which is alkaline by nature and therefore acts as a 'buffer' to acids being secreted within the stomach. When horses are fed high cereal/energy based 'meals' and left for many hours without access to forage, the acid secretion starts to build up and damages the mucous lining of the stomach which often leads to formation of painful ulceration. If the large intestine (hind gut) is kept stable by chewing and digesting frequent amounts of fibre the horse will not only be healthy from a gastrointestinal perspective, but will also be constantly producing acid buffering saliva, which in turns helps prevent gastric ulceration.

Horses survived in the wild by sprinting and sustaining energy over long periods on a diet of plants, herbs and grasses, and we have now discovered that oil is well digested by the horse and is a good supplementary form of energy, so it makes sense that we include these ingredients as the basis of our horse's diets, whatever their job. If the horse's digestive system remains stable, he will not only maintain digestive equilibrium but also be able to perform to his optimum ability without the debilitating effects of painful gastric ulceration.

Total™ Keeping The Horse at Heart



Gullivers Travels, seen here before and after a Total™ recovery.