

**The event horse needs to be fed with condition and stamina in mind**



## EVENTING

THE pinnacle of equestrian sport, eventing requires your horse to be responsive and obedient in the dressage test, fast and bold across country and supple and careful in the showjumping ring. Preparing your horse to compete at any level of the sport requires a holistic approach from fitness training, schooling and farriery through to correct nutrition.

When looking for the ideal feed for your event horse one of the first considerations is which source of energy would best suit your horse's temperament.

If your horse is the sharp and excitable type, choose feeds based on fibre and oil rather than cereal starch. Fibre and oil are digested and used slowly and are therefore described as slow releasing energy sources, whereas starch and sugar are digested and released into the blood stream relatively quickly, which may increase the risk of excitable, spooky behaviour.

Another important consideration with eventing is the level you are competing at.

The additional nutritional demands are likely to be small up to novice, especially if your horse

is a good doer. Do not be tempted to feed a competition mix to an already well-conditioned horse just because he has moved from intro to pre-novice — this could lead to tying up or at the very least unwanted weight gain.

As you move up the ranks to competition over two or three days the nutritional demands will be greater, requiring more careful attention to maintaining condition, stamina and hydration.

Look for higher energy feeds based on fibre, with controlled starch and higher levels of oil. This will provide extra energy to fuel performance while reducing the risk of tying up, digestive disturbances or gastric ulcers.

Rehydration is hugely important, especially following fast training and the cross-country phase. Fresh water must be provided at all times; for the lower level of competition salt licks and use of a specially designed electrolyte after hard work is ideal.

For horses sweating more regularly, use an electrolyte supplement designed for daily use or even table salt. Aim for one to two tablespoons a day, plus a recovery electrolyte after periods of excess sweating.