

Abstract of German text:

Case study:

Adverse effects on health by long-time feeding of supplemented horse-feed.

The investigation deals with long-time feeding of trace element and vitamin supplemented horse-feed to horses. Seven horses of different age and breed were observed over a period of about 4 ½ years. Depending on the horse and its individual sensitivities, the development or deterioration of symptoms of different disorders or diseases was observed, but there was a characteristic chronology in the development of the symptoms. After half a year of feeding all horses seemed to feel better in most respects. After about a year first minor negative changes were perceptible only by the owners, knowing their horses well (especially increase or development of sweet-itch or/and head-shaking). After two years of feeding supplemented horse-feed the symptoms had become apparent for everyone. After about two and a half years the feeding of supplemented horse-feed was stopped and feeding changed to pure oats, hay, grass, straw, carrots and fruits. With all seven horses the first signs of improvement in health were perceptible after 1 to 5 months, characteristically 3-4 months and improvement continued thereafter as compared to the same time of the year before. After about a year of feeding only natural feedstuff, the symptoms of disease in every horse had either disappeared or strongly improved. The investigation clearly shows long-time damaging effects on the health of horses by feeding supplemented horse-feed of the described composition. But reliable reports from other sides seem to show this as being a very general phenomenon. Minimum requirements of trace elements and vitamins for horses commonly cited in literature seem to be in excess. Furthermore the chemical compositions in the supplements seem to be unsuited for the horses' digestion. It is proposed to establish new maximal requirements for horses by analyzing the feed in a long-time successful racing-stable and to establish minimum requirements by averaging the contents in natural feedstuff, on which horses have been bred and selected over centuries.

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