EQUINE FARM MANAGER · USER GUIDE

Forage & Hay Planning User Guide

Size the herd's hay for the year by cutting, test it, cost it per calorie, match it to every horse, and track inventory down to the bale with the daily feed chart and feeding log.

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01 About forage planning

The Forage tab estimates each horse's annual hay need, tracks it by cutting, checks whether the hay meets each horse's energy and protein needs, and prices it. In the Equine Farm Manager it also pulls body condition from the BCS tab, pasture share from your grazing systems, and draws inventory down as you feed.

Forage first. Size it, test it, and fill only the real gaps. Grain is for horses that need calories forage cannot supply.

WHAT CHANGED FROM THE STAND-ALONE FORAGE LEDGER

- Horses are entered once on the Farm tab and shared here.
- BCS comes from the latest saved worksheet automatically.
- **Cutting fed** can be left on Auto so the app picks the best-fit cutting in stock.
- Lab reports import as XML or PDF, and the library now records calcium, phosphorus, and lysine.
- New cards: pasture sugar risk, pasture intake calculator, feeding window, daily feed chart, and a feeding log that draws down bales on hand.

02 Before you start

- Add your horses on the Farm tab with weight, class, housing, and grazing system.

- Gather bale weights and counts for each cutting or load, what you paid or what it cost to grow, and any forage analyses.
- Revisit the plan at haying, when lab results return, and again in the fall before barn-up.

03 Step 1: The herd

`Forage tab · The herd: class · grazing · cutting fed`

Class, grazing system, weight, and head count come from each horse. Edit them here or on the Farm tab; both stay in sync. BCS is pulled from the latest worksheet. A single horse is a group of one; a set of similar horses can be one row with a head count.

Intake by class

Class sets dry-matter intake as a percent of body weight and the energy and protein targets:

CLASS	TYPICAL DM INTAKE	NOTES
Maintenance, easy keeper	~1.5%	Watch condition
Maintenance, average	~2.0%	Default adult
Maintenance, hard keeper	~2.25%	Struggles to hold weight
Senior	~2.0%	Chewability and quality matter most
Insulin resistant / EMS	~1.5% of ideal weight	Managed by sugar, not volume
Light, moderate, heavy work	~2.0–2.75%	Rises with workload
Breeding stallion in season	~2.25%	Similar to moderate work
Broodmare, gestation or lactation	~2.0–2.75%	Climbs late in gestation and early in lactation
Growing (weanling, yearling)	~2.5–2.75%	High needs per pound; confirm with a nutritionist

Cutting fed: Auto or a pick

Leave **Auto** on and the app feeds each horse the best-fit cutting in stock for energy, protein, and, for insulin-resistant and easy-keeping horses, low sugar. Pick a specific cutting to override. If a picked cutting reaches **0 bales on hand**, the app falls back to the best available cutting and flags it on this card.

KEEP COUNTS CURRENT

Auto is only as good as the inventory behind it. Use the feeding log, and update received bales when you restock.

04 Step 2: Feeding method

Feeding method sets the waste allowance. It often moves the annual total more than any other input.

FEEDING METHOD	WASTE ALLOWANCE
Slow-feed hay net	~6%
Manger or hay rack	~12%
Round bale with feeder	~15%
On the ground	~20%
Round bale, no feeder	~30%

Use **Waste override (%)** if you have measured your own waste.

05 Step 3: The hay library

`Forage tab · Hay library — cuttings, cost & analysis`

Add one entry per cutting or lot you keep separate: first cutting, second cutting, a purchased load. Keeping them separate lets the app feed leafier cuttings to the horses that need them and show whether you baled enough of each.

FIELD	WHAT TO ENTER
Name / lot	A name you'll recognize on the feed chart, such as "2026 2nd cut, north field"
Source	Hay (stored) or Pasture (grazed)
Forage type, quality	Grass, mixed, or legume; premium to fair. Drives the estimate until a test is entered.
Field	Optional link to the field it came from
lb / bale, bales on hand	Tons on hand is figured from these two
Cutting #, date	Harvest details
DM %, DE, CP, ESC + starch	From the lab report; dry-matter basis
Calcium, phosphorus, lysine	From the lab report; percent of dry matter

Importing a lab report

Use **Import lab report (XML / PDF)**. When your lab offers an XML file, use it; it is the most reliable. A lab PDF can place as-sampled and dry-matter columns side by side, so check the imported values against the report. A lab report fills DE, CP, DM, and sugar; untested cuttings use the quality and type estimate.

VALUE	WHY IT MATTERS
Dry matter	How much of each bale is feed. Sets the as-fed pounds needed.
DE (Mcal/lb)	The basis of the energy check. Values outside about 0.40–1.10 are flagged "Check DE."
Crude protein	Compared against each class's protein need.
ESC + starch	Sugar and starch load. Aim under about 10% for insulin-resistant and laminitis-prone horses.
Calcium, phosphorus	Hay should supply at least as much calcium as phosphorus; many nutritionists aim for a ratio near 1.5:1 to 2:1.
Lysine	The first limiting amino acid for horses; matters most for growing horses and broodmares.

06 Step 4: Hay economics

Choose the cost basis for each cutting:

- **Per bale:** price plus delivery or handling per bale.
- **Per ton:** converted using bale weight. Common for large squares and rounds.
- **Farm-grown:** acres harvested, yield (tons/acre), land charge, establishment, fertilizer and lime, fuel, repairs and machinery, twine or net wrap, and labor. Returns cost per acre, per ton, and per bale.

FARM-GROWN HAY ISN'T FREE

Leaving out land, labor, and machinery is the most common way producers underprice their own forage. Without them, the figure is a cash cost, not a full cost.

Cost of feed compared

Every cutting is priced in **dollars per megacalorie**. That prices what the horse actually gets, not what the bale weighs. A cheap, stemmy cutting often costs more per calorie than a pricier leafy one.

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$ per Mcal = cost per lb as fed ÷ (DM fraction × DE in Mcal/lb DM)
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07 What testing changed

Once any cutting has a lab analysis, the app runs the plan twice: once on measured dry matter and energy, once on the visual estimate. It reports the difference so you can see what the test was worth in tons and dollars, and flags what only testing reveals: sugar against insulin-resistance thresholds, protein against broodmare and growth needs, and moisture surprises.

08 Step 5: Grazing and pasture

Each horse has a grazing system with a percent of each month's forage from pasture. Western New York defaults (dry lot, managed grazing on dry lot, track system, rotational pasture, full-season turnout) can be edited to match your fields. The pasture sugar card and pasture intake calculator refine this further. See *Pasture, Grazing & Sugar Risk*.

09 Reading the plan

FIGURE	WHAT IT TELLS YOU
Hay to feed, full year	Tons, bales, and as-fed pounds for the herd, after pasture and waste
Peak day (all-hay)	The herd's heaviest single day of hay
Heaviest month	Your winter storage requirement; check it against what the barn holds
Hay value on hand	Inventory valued at each cutting's cost
Cost / horse / yr	Annual hay cost per head
Hay demand across the year	Monthly need, showing where pasture carries the herd
Have vs. need by cutting	Surplus or shortfall per cutting. A surplus in one cutting does not cover a shortfall in another.

10 The feeding window

`Forage tab · Feeding window — what to still buy, barn-up to turnout`

Set a window start and end (and a buy price, if you like). Need is figured **day by day** across the window using each horse's class, weight, feeding waste, and that month's grazing share, so a window that runs into grazing season already credits pasture.

- **Still to buy** nets hay on hand against the window's need.
- **Quality target** says what each horse needs, so you can match a seller's hay test.
- **Low-sugar need** is tracked separately. Surplus average hay does not cover an insulin-resistant or easy-keeping horse.

11 Daily feed chart and feeding log

Daily feed chart: pounds of hay per horse right now, reflecting this month's pasture, split AM and PM. Amounts drop in grazing season and rise in winter. Print it from Reports → *Daily feed chart* for whoever throws hay.

Feeding log: each entry subtracts bales from a cutting, so bales on hand, Auto selection, and fallback all track real inventory.

1. Press **Log today's feeding**. The app reads the chart, converts each horse's pounds to bales of the cutting it is actually fed, and records today. Running it again replaces today's entry rather than adding a second one.
2. For a manual entry, choose date, cutting, and bales fed, add a note if needed, and press **Add feeding**.
3. When you restock a cutting, raise its received bales on the cutting's card in the hay library.

12 Does the hay meet the herd?

Compares the energy and protein in hay eaten at target intake against each group's estimated need, using the cutting it is fed as the only forage. Results read short, meets, or rich. Use **Rations** for optional

manual notes: a horse, a forage lot, and pounds per day.

> **CONFIRM WITH A PROFESSIONAL**
> This is a planning aid, not a formulated ration. Confirm insulin-resistant, senior, broodmare, and growing horses with your veterinarian or an equine nutritionist.

13 Assumptions and troubleshooting

- Intake and energy follow NRC (2007)-style estimates scaled to body weight.
- Untested cuttings assume 90% dry matter and a visual-quality energy estimate.
- The energy check assumes hay is the only forage at target intake.

PROBLEM	FIX
"Check DE"	Confirm the value is Mcal per pound of dry matter, not Mcal/kg or megajoules.
Imported values look doubled or low	The import may have read the as-sampled column. Re-enter from the dry-matter column.
A horse shows a fallback flag	Its picked cutting is at 0 bales. Restock it, update received bales, or switch to Auto.
Bales on hand dropped twice	Look for a manual entry on the same day as Log today's feeding, and delete one.

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