

Healthy Hooves, Happy Horse

There is no doubt that feeding your horse milled flaxseed has benefits.

Ask any horse owner feeding flax and they will talk about the coat shine as their first sign that something good is happening inside their horse. Reports of benefit range from the mundane to the miraculous.

There is very little researched data linking flax to any specific benefit for horses. The study most cited was done at Guelph several years ago. "Horses' diets were supplemented with ground flax meal (500 grams per day) for 42 days; on days 0, 21, and 42 they were injected subcutaneously with *Culicoides* extract, saline (negative control), and histamine (positive control). The flaxseed strongly inhibited the allergic skin reaction to the *Culicoides* injection." reported by Dr. Wendy Pearson, PhD (Dr. of Veterinary Toxicology); <http://www.horsejournals.com/horse-care/alternative-therapies/sweet-itch-flaxseed-can-help>

A beef farmer came to our retail store this week. He was in town to pick up medication to help heal a split hoof on his daughter's horse. The hoof was already cleared of the infection which had set in, but it was still subject to injury from the unhealed split. Our local veterinarians, very familiar with our product, recommended that he try feeding milled flaxseed.

There is strong case evidence, reported by farriers and veterinarians, that flax helps reduce the risk of hoof cracking and helps the hoof grow out more quickly. Of course, this is good news for farriers earning at least some of their living from trimming hoofs. But the great benefit is for the horse which can recover more quickly from an unevenly worn, cracked or split hoof and the rider looking for their horse to have healthy hooves that provide sure footing and a balanced gait.

I will be following this case closely for sure.

Case stories like this are reported to me often. Some are very dramatic, others simply facts. If you have a story or your own case study about how feeding flax has helped your horse, mundane or miraculous, please send it along. I would love to hear it.

It is cases studies like these which lead to evidence of benefit and eventual research.