

# Animal Aromatics Herbal Factsheet 1

## Feeding herbs to Horses



Horses like all animals are born with the natural or innate ability to self-select herbs which they require in their diet to rebalance their bodies systems. Self selection, also called self-medication, can be achieved by naturally foraging on wild herbs in their fields, hedgerows, browsing on tree leaves, eating roots and bark, even licking soil. Favourites include willow bark, rosehips and cleavers. Herbs can be selected for a wide range of issues including digestive issues like ulcers, for pain management, for cell repair, skin conditions and allergies to name just a few.

### Herbs Vs Drugs

Herbs like drugs have active ingredients. Drugs have a known quantity of one active ingredient, and a dose is prescribed by a vet according to the severity of condition and bodyweight. Herbs are different and unlike drugs, whole herbs have several active ingredients which can affect different body systems. For example meadowsweet and willow contain a natural source of salacyn, the active ingredient in aspirin widely known for its pain killing and anti-inflammatory actions. In addition the whole herbs (rather than an extract) contain a mucilage compound which lines and protects the gut wall preventing it from damage and ulcers.

### Herb Dosages

Some websites suggest quantities of herbs to feed according to bodyweight, but this is misleading because the precise amount of active ingredients in each batch of herb can vary. Rest assured all our herbs, roots, barks, berries and powders are of the finest human grade and quality tested, so your horse is still receiving the highest quality products, but we do not prescribe or recommend dosages for this reason.

### Self Selection

By far the best method to 'feed' herbs is by self-selection. Using this technique we are allowing our horses to choose what they need to rebalance and self medicate. To do this, offer a small amounts of each herb in separate bowls at the same time. This technique requires some time and patience, and can be a bit messy but is very rewarding. If you choose this method ensure the following:

- Choose a quiet time of the day so you can both focus on the task in hand.
- Ensure fresh water is available at all times.
- Ensure your horse isn't hungry – offer hay at the same time, or carry out in the field.
- Mix powders with a small amount of water.
- Make notes of the herbs selected for future reference.

If you require further information please contact us at [enquiries@animalaromatics.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@animalaromatics.co.uk)

### Adding herbs to feeds

Self selection may not be practical for a variety of reasons, but don't worry, your horse can still benefit from the power of herbs. Simply add a small amount to each feed, and gradually increase until improvements are seen. Herbs can be safely added together, but be aware that your horse may choose not to eat them if they don't need them, or if their body systems have rebalanced at that point in time. They may like them added again in the future so try again. Worried about overdosing? Ingesting toxic levels of herbs is highly unlikely. There is scientific research where massive doses of active ingredients are injected into laboratory animals causing toxicity. These doses are highly concentrated and it would be physically impossible to ingest that amount at any one time. Poisonings can occur with plants including ragwort and acorns, but these tend to occur when little other forage is available, the diet is poor or the plant like ragwort is dried and masked.

### Pre-mixed Herbs

Animal Aromatics offers a variety of mixes specifically designed for promoting health. These include improving gut health, improving mobility, supporting the immune system and supporting liver function. In addition to these, bespoke mixes are available on request. Mixes can be added to the usual food rations starting with a small amount, and gradually increasing the amount fed.



Licking soil rebalances the gut

### Dock seeds are a nutritious winter delicacy



Offer hay and water during a self-medication session