

# Breeding special



For a good start  
to life

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# Off to a good start

Supporting the foal correctly begins during gestation, something most breeders know. Yet, this period still raises many questions:

- **When do you start with feeding a mare pellet?**
- **And how much do you need to feed?**
- **When the foal is born, when do you start feeding a foal concentrate?**
- **And what is the right amount to feed?**

Especially during the foaling season, these are important topics, so it's time to explain a few things in this breeding special!



#Mare&Foal

## The final phase of gestation

The final stage of pregnancy is crucial for the health of both the mare and the foal. During this phase, the foal experiences the most growth, resulting in a high nutritional demand for the mare.

**IMPORTANT! It is essential that a mare is in top condition before giving birth, as this, combined with the initiation of milk production, is absolute top-level sport.**

During pregnancy, constantly monitor the mare's body condition score (BCS) closely. The BCS provides an indication for checking energy intake. Note that a good BCS does not necessarily mean that the mare is receiving enough protein. It is important to monitor muscle mass carefully. If muscle loss occurs, it means that the mare is relying on her reserves, and supplementation with high-quality protein is necessary.



## The last month of gestation

In the last month, the energy and protein requirements increase, with the protein requirement rising the most (about 180% compared to basic maintenance requirements).

Currently, we see many batches of roughage with a (too) low energy content, often combined with a (too) low protein levels. In addition, there is less space available in the mare's abdomen. This makes it impossible to consume extra roughage if the quality is low. Therefore, the recommendation is to start supplementing with a concentrate feed, especially in the final phase of pregnancy.

Because a mare in this phase has specific needs and plays an important role in the development of the foal, we have developed **Ferto-LAC 3**. This concentrate has already proven itself in breeding for many years.

# Ferto-LAC 3

Ferto-LAC 3 is specially developed to meet the needs of the mare in the final phase of pregnancy and to support the proper development of the foal.

Ferto-LAC 3 is a tasty 7 mm pellet with:

- The Multi-Calcium-Complex, extra copper, and amino acids to support optimal bone growth and a consistent development of the foal.
- Increased energy and protein content, for optimal milk production and consistent growth of the foal.
- Excellent value for money.

[Click here for detailed product information about Ferto-LAC 3.](#)



#7mmMarepellet

## Feeding guideline Ferto-LAC 3

Several factors play a role in determining the right amount of concentrate feed, such as the mare's physical condition, the quality and quantity of roughage, stable and pasture management, and the stage of gestation or lactation.

Below is an overview of the feeding advice for Ferto-LAC 3:

Guideline	Bodyweight mare	
	400 kg	600 kg
<b>Ferto-LAC 3</b>		
Gestation 8-11 months	1,5 - 3,0 kg	3,0 - 4,5 kg
Lactation 1st - 3rd months	2,0 - 4,0 kg	4,0 - 6,0 kg
Lactation from the 3rd month	1,0 - 3,0 kg	2,5 - 4,5 kg



The recommended amounts of concentrate feed should be divided into several (small) daily portions. It should be fed alongside sufficient roughage and fresh drinking water. Of course, Ferto-LAC 3 can also be started before the last trimester of pregnancy.

# The milk production

Although producing milk after birth is a natural process, we sometimes forget how much energy it takes to initiate and maintain the milk production. Not every mare is the same in this regard, and it's not always possible to produce enough milk.

Milk production causes the need for energy and protein to skyrocket. During the peak of lactation, a mare requires twice as much energy (compared to the basic maintenance requirements) and more than three times as much protein (compared to the basic maintenance requirements).



It's no coincidence that grass in the spring is full of nutrients. However, the soil is becoming poorer, and we can no longer rely on grass to cover all nutritional needs. Fortunately, Ferto-Lac 3 helps provide the horse with the necessary nutrients, ensuring the foal gets the best milk to grow into a true champion!

In addition, the breeding season has also changed in recent years. More and more foals are being born early in the year, when horses still do not have access to fresh grass. This makes it even more important to provide mares with an additional mare concentrate, like our Ferto-LAC 3, to prepare them for birth.

**Immediately after birth, it is crucial for the foal to receive the first colostrum to absorb the initial antibodies, strengthen its immune system, and take in the first vital nutrients.**

During the peak of lactation (usually around 10 weeks), the mare requires twice as much energy (compared to the basic maintenance needs) and more than three times as much protein (compared to the basic maintenance needs).

## *The foal has finally arrived*



After a long wait, when the foal is finally born, we want nothing more than to provide the best care.

You can trust in the **power of nature**, as the mare's milk provides the foal with the necessary nutrients.

The mare normally provides the foal with the important colostrum, so the foal does not need "extra external support" during the first months.

Over time, the foals become more curious and slowly begin to eat together the mother mare their first hay and grass, and after a while, they also start eating the mare's concentrate feed.

# The right time for concentrate feed

**When should you start feeding concentrate to the foal?**

You can actually start at a very young age, when they show interest in the mare's feed. However, most foals are usually fine with just the mare's milk.

If you decide to feed foal concentrate, be sure to start with very small amounts so that the intestines can gradually get used to the new feed.



With a healthy mare and foal, the foal does not need concentrate feed during the first two months. After about three to four months, the nutrients in the mare's milk gradually decrease, so at that point, it makes sense to provide the foal with high-quality roughage and start feeding a foal concentrate, like our **Opti-GROW**. This way, the foal continues to receive all the important nutrients.



## Opti-GROW

Opti-GROW foal concentrate is a 5 mm pellet with:

- **Multi-Calcium-Complex** and extra amino acids that support a consistent development of the foal's skeleton and muscle mass.
- **Extra high-quality proteins and milk powder.**
- **High palatability, combined with the smaller diameter of the pellets, which promotes easy intake.**

The pellet form ensures the foal receives all the important nutrients without the possibility of selection.

[Click here for more detailed information about Opti-GROW.](#)

The right amount of concentrate feed for foals also depends on many factors, such as their current physical condition, age, amount and quality of roughage, stable and pasture management, group structure, etc.

We recommend feeding Opti-GROW until the age of about 18 months, after which you can switch to, for example, our DraversBrok, our Gastro+ or our Sport-Muesli.

You can find a rough nutritional guideline in our feeding chart on the following page.

# Feeding advice Opti-GROW

Guideline	Future bodyweight foal	
	400 kg	600 kg
Opti-GROW		
Weaning	Build up to 0,8 kg	Build up to 1,2 kg
From 6 to 12 months	0,8 - 1,4 kg	1,2 - 2,0 kg
From 12 to 18 months	1,2 - 1,6 kg	1,8 - 2,4 kg



The recommended amounts of concentrate feed should be divided into several small daily portions. It should be fed alongside sufficient roughage and fresh drinking water.

## The weaning period



Most foals are weaned from the mare at around 6 months of age. It is important that the foal is already accustomed to concentrate feed. This increases the chance that the foal will continue eating roughage and the necessary foal feed long after being weaned from the mother, thus avoiding any 'deficiency.'

We also recommend paying close attention to the foal's drinking behavior after weaning. Drinking enough water is very important, especially now that the foal no longer has access to milk from the mare.

**TIP: the best way to monitor this is to place a bucket of water in the stable.**

During and after weaning, it is extremely important to provide sufficient high-quality roughage (1.5 - 2% of the body weight per day based on dry matter). Continuous chewing by the foal can help reduce the risk of acid reflux and the associated chance of developing gastric ulcers.

This can especially happen during the weaning period, as the foals still need to adjust to the new situation without their mother and get used to new playmates.

If you notice during this phase that the foal is eating less and/or showing signs of stress, additional support with our 7 mm Gastro+ pellet may be helpful.

**Gastro+ contains a special blend of various acid buffers and probiotics, supporting a healthy pH balance in the stomach. More information about Gastro+ can be found [HERE](#).**



Still unsure about the right feed? You can request feeding advice via [info@havens.nl](mailto:info@havens.nl)