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**Maximising the Benefits of Supplements**

Supplements: nearly all of us use them on our horses- whether they be nutritional, herbal or a combination of both. With our increasing scientific evidence-based knowledge of their applications; modern changes in feeding and management practices; and high performance and breeding demands placed on many horses today- appropriate supplementation can be highly beneficial. In order to obtain optimal results in your horse, the supplements must be in doses appropriate for the horse (noting that in the case of many supplements, the suggested dose by manufacturers is often far less than what is needed to achieve a therapeutic effect in the horse); be in a highly bioavailable form (the ingredients need to be in a form that the horse can easily absorb and metabolise); and be given away from any other supplements or nutrients that may compete for absorption.

Before using any supplement in your horse, you need to be able to confidently answer the following questions:

\*Why am I giving my horse this supplement? Simply because it is ‘good for them’ or ‘someone said I should’ does not suffice! You need to understand what role the supplement is playing in your horse’s wellbeing- and why they require this supplement in addition to feeding, exercise and management practices.

\*How much of this supplement does my horse need to achieve a therapeutic effect?

\*Does this supplement compete for absorption with any other supplements I am giving?

\*Is this supplement in the most bioavailable form?

\*How long am I going to be using this supplement on my horse for?

\*If your horse is on any medications, do you know the possible interactions the supplement may have with the medication(s)?

\*Is there evidence to support the use of this supplement?

\*For those that are competing, is this supplement swabbable?

\*Are there any potential risks associated with the use of this supplement?

**These are not necessarily easy questions to answer, so take the guess work out of your supplementation and let me help you to:**

\*Ensure that your horse’s specific requirements are being met

\*Use the most appropriate supplements for your individual horse and circumstances

\*Save time and money

\*Develop an effective and specific treatment/supplementation program

\*Ensure that the supplements you are using are safe for your horse