

SGLT2 Inhibitors

(ertugliflozin or canagliflozin)

Things to Consider from a Nutritional Perspective

The first thing to emphasise is that the following information is intended to highlight some significant nutritional considerations. Whether your horse or pony could benefit from SGLT2i medications is something you must discuss with your vet!

In September 2024 a group of leading vets published a letter in the Vet Record highlighting concerns about a number of cases of hyperlipaemia developing as a result of the use of SGLT2i (ertugliflozin or canagliflozin) medications. Due to these incidents the vets issued the following recommendations:

“the medications are used only in horses that have failed to respond adequately to appropriate dietary and exercise management or those with significant active laminitis” and “owners should be informed of the potential adverse effects and be counselled to be vigilant for the clinical signs of hyperlipaemia.”

In response to this we have compiled the following checklist for all the dietary management and other actions that we believe can and should be taken before resorting to medication.

- 1.** Restrict access to pasture through use of grazing muzzles, dry lot paddocks such as woodchip, stabling.
- 2.** Conduct a forage analysis to establish non-structural carbohydrate (NSC) and energy content.
- 3.** Ensure forage intake is equal to or exceeds 1.5% of bodyweight on a dry matter basis.
- 4.** Include up to 50% of the forage ration as straw either long length or chopped to help ensure NSC intake is below 10% in the total diet and to help achieve weight loss.
- 5.** Ensure the diet is balanced using a vitamin and mineral supplement or balancer mixed with a straw based, chopped fibre feed to slow rate of intake. When consumed quickly even a balancer may result in an exaggerated insulinaemic response if fed to a horse or pony with insulin dysregulation (ID), so it is important to slow the rate of intake with the use of a straw-based chop which takes longer to eat. We also recommend dividing the daily balancer feeding rate into at least 2 meals.
- 6.** Ensure your vet has outlined the risks associated with the use of SGLT2i medications to you.
- 7.** Ensure you have told your vet everything about your horse’s current diet and management – your vet can only make an assessment on the safety and suitability of the medications for your horse or pony on the basis of the information you have given them.
- 8.** Ensure you and your vet monitor your horse closely throughout their treatment – this should involve taking blood samples at regular intervals to monitor your horse’s liver function.
- 9.** Ensure your horse continues to eat well whilst receiving the medication. If they become inappetent contact your vet immediately.
- 10.** Please contact our Feedline for help with your horse or pony’s diet.

To learn more about hyperlipaemia and how to spot the signs, scan the QR code.

