

# EQUISTRO®



**Description:** The common oat (*Avena sativa*) is a species of cereal grain grown for its seed, which is known by the same name (usually in the plural, unlike other grains). Oats belong to the best and most popular grain feeds for horses because they were readily available, cheap and, most importantly, best suited to their digestive systems. They should be clean, big and hard and free from dust.

**Properties:** They have the highest fibre content and lowest energy of all the grains, making them the safest to feed. They contain 7% to 9.5% digestible protein and sixty starch units. It is also fairly rich in fat (4.5% oil, from among the grains, second only to corn). The fiber content is about 13 percent. This means oats have more bulk per nutrient content, and horses have to eat more to satisfy their nutrient requirements. Bulk makes it more difficult for the horse to overeat and get colic or founder. Oats are considered the «safest» grain to feed horses because their starch is more easily digested in the horse's small intestine than the starches in Maize or barley. This minimizes the potential for

undigested starches to reach the horse's hind gut where they can cause colic. Oats are also less susceptible to contamination by molds producing mycotoxins than other whole grains such as Maize or Barley. This means horse owners can buy, feed, and store them with greater confidence. Horses like oats and oats are easier to chew than other grains and horses relish their taste. Their palatability makes oats the grain of choice for finicky eaters, hard keepers, and performance horses such as racehorses or eventer horses. It's a commonly held belief that oats send all horses sky-high. In fact, as with any concentrates, if they are fed in proportion to the level of work actually being done, rather than anticipated, oats rarely cause a problem but a few who are sensitive will react. Alone, oats are an unbalanced feed as they are very low in calcium, but relatively high in phosphorus. In addition, they are very low in macronutrients, in particular zinc and copper. They are not a sufficient source of protein for horses in hard work or breeding. However, oats are rarely fed in isolation and when used alongside good quality hay, grass, alfalfa, and a broad-spectrum supplement, many of the potential problems will be off-set. Oats can be fed whole or processed. Processing includes crimping, rolling, or crushing the kernel. Whole oats are easily eaten and digested by the horse. If oats are processed, a slight crimp is sufficient. When the kernel coat is broken by processing, less chewing is required, and digestive juices have better access to the kernel.

**Possible uses:** Oats supply depends on the workload—if the horse is not worked and is on good pasture, perhaps oats are unneeded. If the horse receives significant exercise and/or is not on pasture (hay only), or is recovering from a problem, it will most likely benefit from the addition of some whole oats to its diet. In nursing mares oats support the milk production, by the stallion, they enhance the breeding instinct. Oat digestibility can be particularly critical and interesting for performance sport horses or racehorses in training whose daily grain ration may approach 50 percent (by weight) of their total diet.



## OATS



# Vétoquinol



Signe de Passion