

Professional Equine Nutritionist Karen Richardson shared her experiences using magnesium on her Facebook page. This is a 2015 posting and follows her reporting, in Horses and People Magazine, some research carried out by Jess Dodd at Charles Sturt University on the effect of magnesium on the fear response of horses. She also shared our Magnesium video with her followers.

Richardson Equine Nutrition Solutions

19 June at 02:25 ·

Magnesium Supplementation - After writing the "Does Magnesium Provide a Calming Effect?" article for Horses and People Magazine, I decided to conduct my own experiment on my horses.

10 days ago I added 15g Magnesium Oxide powder to their diets. Their dietary magnesium was already adequate according to NRC guidelines and was appropriately balanced with the dietary calcium. The extra magnesium meant they were receiving more than they needed for their level of work etc, and the Ca:Mg ratio had become very tight (less than the recommended ratio of 1.5 - 2 : 1). The changes observed in their behaviour over the past week has surprised me. Both horses have become very reactive to grazing amongst a very tree covered area. This is a new grazing area for them but they had become accustomed to it and would happily graze for hours down there. Over the past week I have been wondering if lions had moved in as the horses seem to gallop "back home" at the slightest disturbance, and spend less time down there. I have noticed my WB has become very grumpy (he can be a grump at times, but not as much as he seems to be now) and he has become quite jumpy in really familiar places - like his stable. When ridden, he has become less reactive and quite dull. The change in behaviour when ridden has been very noticeable and is not a good change. He is not "with" me. Needless to say, I have stopped giving them the additional magnesium and look forward to them getting back to their "old selves".

Just today I watched a video by EquiFeast. Yes it is a plug for their product, but they do go into some science about magnesium and its potential affects when over-supplemented. If you are interested I will put the link in a separate post.

For me, this experiment has brought home the message that over-supplementing, and not adhering to those ratios, can have real negative effects on your horse. So, think twice and get advice before you add that tablespoon of magnesium (or other supplement) to your horse's diet.

Karen Richardson BSc(Hons), MSc Equine Science
Richardson Equine Nutrition Solutions

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Malcolm Green Hi Karen,

Thank you for reporting your really simple experiment. Having seen our video you won't be surprised that I am not surprised by the result. What is interesting is the time scale on Mag Oxide. We have always used very low levels of chelated magnesium when we feel the need to add any. But, whilst you need more if you use MgO we still see the same effect. So we assume that organic and inorganic sources of magnesium all eventually contribute to the pool of magnesium ions.

That is definitely NOT true of the difference between inorganic and organic calcium. Organically bound calcium seems to have a role of its own that the physiologists, neuroscientists and biochemists are yet to study.

Thanks for posting the video! We need to keep in touch!

Malcolm Green

Like · Reply · 23 June at 08:58



Richardson Equine Nutrition Solutions Thanks Malcolm. I was very surprised by my observations. I tend to be very much the sceptic but the changes were real in my opinion, as were the changes I saw after ceasing the MgO. Interesting. Happy to keep in touch.

Like · 1 · 23 June at 09:03

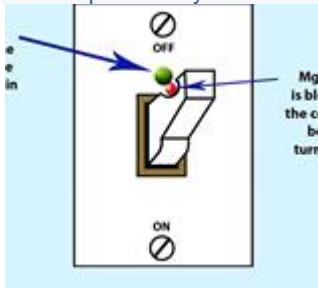


Richardson Equine Nutrition Solutions Just following up on my post. Within 2 days of stopping the additional magnesium and returning to a properly balanced diet my horses (particularly the WB) have returned to their "normal" selves. No more over-reactivity to nonsense stimuli (eg. filling the bucket with water, walking out of my tack room), and my WB was back "with me" today when I rode him, and less grumpy. This has been a great learning experience for me and again reinforces the importance of getting the mineral balance right.

Like · Reply · 21 June at 01:33



Richardson Equine Nutrition Solutions This is the link to the video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JKe4Bvh4E4>



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Like · Reply · 2 · 19 June at 06:07



Julie Lannen thanks Karen, I am going to stop the extra mag and see what happens as I definately have a gelding who is always lethargic

Like · 1 · 19 June at 07:34



Sara Bernard Thanks Karen, here in The Netherlands people are getting on the band wagon too about magnesium. It's popular to supplement magnesium citrate here, but the recommended dose only contains 0.8mg to 1.6mg of elemental magnesium, so probabaly not doing much harm, or good either!

Like · Reply · 1 · 19 June at 07:50



Julie Lannen yes Karen could you post the link please

Like · Reply · 1 · 19 June at 05:52

Here is a link to Karen's report in Horses and People Magazine:

<http://www.horsesandpeople.com.au/article/does-magnesium-supplementation-provide-calming-effect#.Vajr8flVhBd>