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ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

The effect of hay net design on rate of forage consumption when feeding adult horses

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Abstract. Modern horse management systems tend to limit a horse's opportunity to forage. The objective of this experiment was to investigate the effect of hay net design on rate of forage consumption when feeding horses. Eight adult horses were fed in individual stalls in a replicated Latin Square design, with two horses per treatment per week. Horses were fed hay off the stall floor (control), or from one of three hay nets: large (15.2 cm openings), medium (4.4 cm openings) and small (3.2 cm openings). Horses had access to hay for two 4 hour periods each day. When horses could not consume all forage from the medium and small hay nets in 4 hours, a second study utilizing a crossover design gave horses an unlimited amount of time to feed from the hay nets. Stopwatches were used to calculate time to consumption and dry matter intake rates (DMIR). Mean time to consumption was 3.1 and 3.4 hours for the control and large hay net, respectively, in Study1, and 5.1 and 6.5 hours for the medium and small hay nets, respectively, in

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