

No Weigh!

Do you know how much your horse weighs?

By Emily Rhoades

How much do you think your horse weighs? Somewhere in between 800 and 3,000 pounds? How does he or she stack up against the world's largest and smallest horses? Rural Heritage Magazine reports that the world's largest horse, a Percheron named Dr. LeGear, weighed 3,940 pounds and was from St. Louis, Missouri. Is he a little too big for you? How about the Guinness Book of World Records' world's smallest horse, a miniature black mare named Black Beauty- 18.75 inches tall, weighing 41.5 pounds from Kittrell, North Carolina?

The typical riding horse weighs anywhere from 900 to 1,100 pounds, according to Encarta Encyclopedia, and a Quarter Pony comes in just below that at 800 to 900 pounds. If that is not your style of horse, then maybe you would be more interested in a Clydesdale that can weigh up to 2,200 pounds, according to Oklahoma State University's Animal Science Department. fat pony

Knowing the actual weight of your horse is very important to its growth and ability to perform. By weighing your horse regularly, you have a good management tool to help you make correct feeding and vaccination decisions.

"It's extremely beneficial to growing or sick horses," explains Kristen Reid, Georgia equine nutrition consultant for Seminole Feed.

Reid explains that it is good to weigh your horses at least every three months, even if they are in good condition. You can monitor how well your feed is working, as well as if you are feeding too much or too little. Foals should be weighed after they are born and then again at 30 and 60 days of age. To give proper medication amounts you must know the exact weight of your horse. An accurate weight is also important in feeding practices because a horse should be fed a total of 1.5 to 2 percent of its body weight daily.

Equine weight tapes can be misleading and are often between 10 to 100 pounds off of the mark when determining a horse's weight, according to Reid. They only measure your horse's girth and do not take into account the physical build of your horse. Digital scales are much more accurate in determining a weight.

Linda Baca, South Florida based equine nutrition consultant for Seminole Feed, explains that taking accurate weights is very important in cases of

rescue horses that have been starved and need rehabilitation.

“The vet won’t touch them until I get there and weigh them,” says Baca.

Showing accurate weights can make all the difference in abuse court cases Reid says. Being able to show that an abused horse gained substantial amounts of weight after being given proper nutrition and water helps make a strong case against an abuser.

Endurance and trail riding are two events that rely heavily on a horse’s weight as well. By knowing how much a horse has lost or not lost during an event, the owner can determine how fit the horse is. Seminole Feed’s weighing program is very active in helping weigh horses at these events.

“It’s nice of Seminole Feed to have horse scales at some of the endurance rides,” explains endurance rider Anita Carlson of White Oak, Georgia. “It’s really helpful to see how much horses weigh before and after. It’s a good way to help judge their condition and level of training.”

Any farm that purchases Seminole Feed is invited to participate in the Seminole weighing program. Individuals can schedule a digital scale to be brought to their farm, show or event in order to determine accurate weights for their horses. To schedule a weigh in for your horses, call 352-732-4143 or 1-800-683-1881, and ask for customer service.

Maybe your horse isn’t as small as Black Beauty or as big as Dr. LeGear, but its weight is still very important to its success on the trail, in the ring or on the farm.