

Feed for Physique, Movement and Attitude

Dressage legend Robert Dover, though officially retired from showing, still handles a full schedule of training and lessons in New Jersey and Florida. One of his most important daily concerns is proper equine nutrition.

By Summer Best

America's most accomplished dressage rider, Robert Dover, has been in five Olympics, five World Championships and five World Cups, and he is a past recipient of the U.S. Olympic Committee's Males Equestrian Athlete of the Year award. His three Olympic team bronze medals, including a bronze with the stunning grey Oldenburg gelding, Rainier, at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, make him a living legend among horsemen.

Robert Dover

So when this prolific dressage phenomenon purchases feed for Rainier or any of the other horses in his care, what's at the top of his list?

Spillers/Seminole and Seminole Feed products.

"I started using Spillers when I was in Europe," Robert explains. "Of course, it's always nice to keep horses on the same feed program, and when we winter in Florida, the feed is available to us here. Whatever we generally keep in our full care is on Spillers. The horses we've had in the (Olympic) Games have always been on Spillers."

Robert keeps a close watch on each of the horses in his care, evaluating their physique, movement and attitude, and he constantly evaluates ways nutrition can impact these three factors. He notes that his hunters and dressage horses carry more weight than his jumpers, but their overall feeding programs are very similar.

The Olympian's assistant trainer and barn manager, Kathryn Bateson, has worked with Robert for 11 years. Horse health is her No. 1 priority.

"I'm in the barn all the time, so I want to understand how to make them happy and comfortable," Kathryn says. "I think that's a huge part of this competition – knowing the whole animal. If the horses aren't happy, then we are doing something wrong. If they're not happy, they're not going to work for you."

Kathryn, who is originally from England, researches nutrition and feed products often, and she's picky about what the horses put in their mouths.

"I like how Spillers/Seminole products seem a lot more natural and look a lot more grainy – more like they look in Europe – and they don't seem so over-processed," she says.

“My favorite product is the (Spillers/Seminole) Showing Chaff. I like its high fat content – so we can get as much fat to the horses as possible. Warmbloods seem to do very well with that. More fat is better than more starch. Last year, we took a bunch of showing chaff with us when we went back up North just because I liked it so much. We tried to stock up on it. We’ve even taken feed to Europe before if we’re worried that we can’t find a product.” Rainer

What’s in Robert Dover’s Feed Room?

Spillers/Seminole Horse and Pony pellets

Spillers/Seminole Meadow Herb

Seminole Challenge

oats and barley

Spillers/Seminole Showing Chaff

rice bran

timothy and alfalfa hay

various joint supplements

electrolytes

Seminole alfalfa cubes

Right Balance hoof supplement

treats – apples, carrots and other yummys