

# *The Grass Sickness Diary of Chester*



*By Charlotte Pimm*

## Grass Sickness Diary of Chester.

**Breed:** Cob type (breeding unknown)

**D.O.B:** 1994

**Sex:** Gelding

**Height:** 15.0h

**Colour:** Chestnut

Grass sickness is a disease where there is damage to part of the nervous system that controls the involuntary functioning of the digestive system.

This diary is designed to be of some aid to owners of horses that have had their horse diagnosed with grass sickness **and** their vets have stated that it is fair on the animal to attempt the nursing technique. I took the advice of many websites but mainly the Equine Grass Sickness Fund (EGSF) on ways to successfully nurse a grass sickness horse. The team were extremely friendly and understanding sending me out newsletters as well as advice and information over the phone.

Therefore I am publishing my complete day- to-day diary and pictures from the day he showed symptoms to present. This includes his menus of feed throughout; I believe that the amount of food I made him eat helped him enormously to pull through. When he was successfully eating every meal I gave him it cost me on average £100 a week for hard feed, but then other weeks he wouldn't eat much at all. Therefore if you are considering to nurse your horse it can be a financial strain. I was lucky enough to be partially supported for this by my insurance company. What I fed him however was not what kept him alive, it was the nursing that pulled him through. At the time I was only just 17 years old and I was studying my A-Levels at school. When I was faced with the fact that Chester had a slim chance of survival and the only possibility to treat him was to nurse him I left school. It was not an option to not nurse him, although I had seen two on the farm already die from grass sickness before I had to try. During the days in which the tests were being carried out to determine whether he had grass sickness, I rung the EGSF to find out ways I could nurse him and researched as much about Grass Sickness as I could. My parents were incredibly supportive and understanding throughout this time and my Father let me leave my education and the school he was paying for in order to attempt to nurse Chester. Throughout nursing Chester my Mother paid all the vet bills and brought all the feed, equipment, essentials and luxuries he required. She also drove me to the vets' everyday whilst he was there to feed him carrots and to give him a brush. Without my parents support I would not have been able to nurse Chester and consequently he would have died.

**Feed:** I was advised to feed him anything he would eat. His favourite treats have always been carrots so I decided to blend them to avoid him choking because of his inability to swallow properly. He would eat up to 1 bulk sack every 2 days! At the beginning as long as he was eating something I was happy! He would eat bananas, pickled onion monster munch and even mars bars! However be careful with feeding the latter as choke is common so it should always be given when supervised. All the feed given below if not

stated in amounts is combined to fill a bowl. If not otherwise stated an average sized rubber feed bowl is used.



**These are the feed bowls that I used throughout to feed Chester. I put them next to a bin so that the scale of size can be seen. On the left is the large bowl and on the right is the average sized rubber bowl.**

Grass sickness horses tend to refuse to eat so they usually need hand feeding and encouraging. It is more effective when small amounts of feed are presented if they are refusing to eat. Vary the food given, whether changing the variety of feed given or by adding flavours like mint powder or garlic and soaking high energy concentrates in molasses. It is essential that high-energy foods are consumed as chronic cases fed roughages and succulents alone will invariably die.

#### **Feeds used when nursing Chester:**

Baileys No.17 Topline Conditioning Mix: An appetising mix for the promotion of weight gain, top line and condition. Free from whole oats and high in oil for improved stamina and a glossy coat. It is highly digestible and is fully balanced with vitamins and minerals and Yea Sacc (For fibre digestion in the hind gut).

Baileys Stud Mix: The best quality oats are included making the mix nutrient dense and particularly appetising, so ideal for tempting fussy feeders. It is highly digestible with excellent quality protein for muscle and tissue development and repair whilst the superior vitamin and mineral profile has been specially developed to support growth and includes chelated (Bioplex) minerals and important antioxidants.

Spillers High Fibre Cubes: Ideal for grass sickness patients as cubes can be soaked with warm water for 30 minutes to form a mash. They are low in starch and high in fibre. High Fibre Cubes feature the unique Bio-active System; a blend of natural fibre sources that help support gut health and digestion.

Spillers Response Slow Energy Release Mix: Relatively low levels of starch in this feed so they are useful in the management of horses prone to colic. It is

high in digestible fibre and oil. It contains high quality protein and high specification pack including chelated minerals and antioxidant vitamins.

Dodson and Horrell Sixteen Plus: Provides a high level of nutrients from digestible fibre and oil with controlled levels of starch. It has high levels of protein sources of good quality such as soya to ensure that essential amino acids are provided and the feed is fortified with the optimum levels of vitamins and minerals and herbs. Primarily for horses that need to gain and maintain condition. The combination of ingredients helps to nutritionally support mobility and joint integrity, digestion, skin, coat and hoof condition.

Dodson and Horrell Build Up: Formulated for horses and ponies that need to gain condition in a controlled way. Contains slow-release energy sources such as high levels of digestible fibre and oil, which are combined with micronised cereals and fully supplemented with vitamins and minerals to help horses gain weight. It has high levels of protein too.

Blue Chip Original: The primary aim is to help the efficiency of the digestive system by creating and maintaining the optimum condition in which the vitally important microbial population in the gut can thrive. It contains a specific yeast culture that helps create the correct acidic balance in the hind gut, which in turn enables the important fibre digesting bacteria to thrive. Maintaining this more stable and less acidic environment aids the activity of the fibre reducing bacteria. The result is an efficient digestive system which can obtain more nutrients from the diet.

Badminton Horse Feeds Cooked Cereal Conditioning Meal: A highly digestible double cooked cereal meal in a palatable crumb form, providing extra calories for energy and condition. It is made from micronised wheat, a concentrated source of carbohydrate calories, made as digestible as possible through the meticulous cooking process. This maximises the chances of the starch content being digested in the foregut and helps minimise the chance of digestive upsets. It should also be fed damp or can be made into an appetising mash for sick or elderly horses, especially if they have trouble chewing and swallowing.

Protein Pellets:

High Energy mix:

Mollichaff Original: A dust free, high fibre horse feed with added calcium. Limestone is added to provide the calcium to help maintain healthy muscular skeletal system. Not very easy to swallow however in the early stages as it is a bulk feed.

Own brand Oats: They are nutritious and easily digested if fed crushed, rolled or cooked. Oats are a high energy and fibre food.

Own brand Barley: High in fibre, calories and protein content. It is about 11—13% protein. It improves digestibility.

Own brand Sugar beet: Has a high fibre content as well as energy and is easily digestible. When watered down to a soup consistency it is easy to swallow and horses like the taste.

Molasses: Molasses is an energy source but is also fed to horses to increase palatability and to decrease dustiness of feeds. I added it to feed also to add extra taste. Be careful about giving too much molasses as it can cause diarrhea.

Natural yogurt (pro-biotic): Pro-biotics are the 'good bacteria' in the gut.

Garlic: A herb valuable for a healthy respiratory and digestive system.

Mint: Used to maintain palatability and maintain a healthy respiratory system.

Cod Liver Oil - is a useful supplement to help build up resistance to disease.

**Sweating:** Grass sickness patients tend to sweat a lot and on a lesser scale for years during full recovery, this is very smelly during the primary stages. The patients require constant stimulation by human contact, frequent grooming to prevent them becoming scurfy and sticky with sweat and to stimulate the nerve endings. In some cases rugging has been found to reduce sweating and prevent hypothermia. The sweat however made his coat mat despite intense grooming so in the latter stages I clipped these areas, as they were extremely uncomfortable and itchy for him. I was unable to at the start because keeping their body temperature constant is critical. This also means they should not get wet, so avoid bathing and turning out in the rain.

**Rugs:** as grass sickness patients sweat so much I brought two thermatex rugs (and a neck cover for overnight), which I rotated during the day and night so each could dry out. These rugs keep them warm whilst absorbing the sweat. Although expensive they were well worth it and he still wears them over two years later.

**Nose discharge:** Grass sickness horses can produce a thick mucoid material (Rhinitis Sicca) from their nostrils. From Chester this was yellow in colour and sometimes had blood in it. He would regularly snort it out, often shaking his head to remove the discharge.

### **From the beginning**

Before Chester contracted this often, fatal condition I had owned him for 3 and a half years. In that time we had built an incredibly strong bond and had learnt to trust each other in all aspects. We competed most weekends in show jumping at 3ft and above winning many competitions and without fail rosettes! He was a strong, forward going ride and despite his teddy bear looks he could clear 4ft 6 with ease!



However on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2004 I brought him in from the field, he was shaking and sweating. I rang the vet immediately as we had had 2 horses on the farm already die from grass sickness. His heart rate was elevated but his temperature was normal so I was advised to put him back out and take him in to the vets the following morning to be tested.



**Chester at the vets 28/11/04 - 02/12/05**

### Test results

**Glucose absorption Test - 40% malabsorption (abnormal result)**

**Eye Drop Test – negative results**

**Barium Meal test** – He was given a barium swallow which left residual barium pooling in his oesophagus, this was definitely abnormal and indicated that he did have grass sickness.

The test results were back in full in 3 days, it was now Wednesday night. I had been visiting him daily at the vets feeding him carrots and apples because he wouldn't eat his hard feed. He hadn't passed any droppings since he'd been there either. The next option was to have a **biopsy of his intestine**, as this is the only way to get a definite result whether a horse has grass sickness. I elected not to have this done, as it was unlikely he would recover from an operation, and if it was grass sickness I would attempt to nurse him anyway. Having him put down or nursing him were the only options left so I asked them if I could take him home so he could enjoy possibly his last days at the farm where he had been kept for 5 years. On **Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> December** a very frail Chester came home and on the trailer he did a medium sized not too hard dropping. . . there was hope!

That night he was sweating more, however I had hand fed him the majority of 2 bowls of feed consisting of:

1) High fibre cubes/molasses soaked in water to produce a soup texture! A bit of oil, blended carrots and apples. 2) Conditioning mix and water.

He had also eaten some haylage and hay. When I left at 11pm he was eating more of the haylage.

**Girth-194cm.**



**Chester's first night back at home with his thermatex on. (02/12/04)**

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> December**

Overnight: 1 medium sized hard dropping, small patch of urine, drank a little.

Morning: Ate ½ scoop of conditioning mix, molasses, 3 carrots, 6 apples.

Lunch: Ate nearly all of bowl containing: Stud mix, cereal, mint powder, high protein pellets and water.

Supper: Bowl of stud mix, high protein pellets, oil, conditioning mix and warm watered molasses.

Blended half a bowl of carrots as he is unable to swallow solids, his breathing is noisy but no fluid.

Passed urine at about 4pm, very concentrated.

### **Evening**

A few individual droppings, left him half bowl of blended carrots and a bowl of stud mix, protein pellets, molasses and water.

### **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> December**

Overnight: Both bowls all eaten, drunk some water.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of protein pellets, cereal, molasses and water. 1 bowl of blended carrots. Ate most of carrots but not much of breakfast.

Lunch: Yogurt, hops and carrot blended together then added to conditioning mix, stud mix molasses and oil. Ate 1 packet of polos. 1 small dropping, a couple of urine patches, drunk some more water. Took him out for a 5 minute walk for a bit of grass (**AWAY FROM AREA OF LAND THAT APPEARS TO BE CAUSE OF GRASS SICKNESS**).

Supper: Bowl of conditioning mix with warm molasses because he hadn't eaten much all day.

### **Evening**

Left bowl of blended carrots.

### **Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December**

Overnight: He ate everything I left all his lunch, supper and carrots. 2 small droppings and a few urine patches.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of stud mix, protein pellets, cereal, mint and conditioning mix. Ate it all.

Lunch: Bowl of stud mix, fibre cubes, protein pellets, cereal, molasses soaked in hot water (soup texture). Ate it all.

Supper: Blended Hops and yogurt added to stud mix, cereal, protein pellets and molasses, ate it all.

### **Evening**

Left a bowl of conditioning mix and molasses, and half a bucket of carrots. Also had steamed apples.



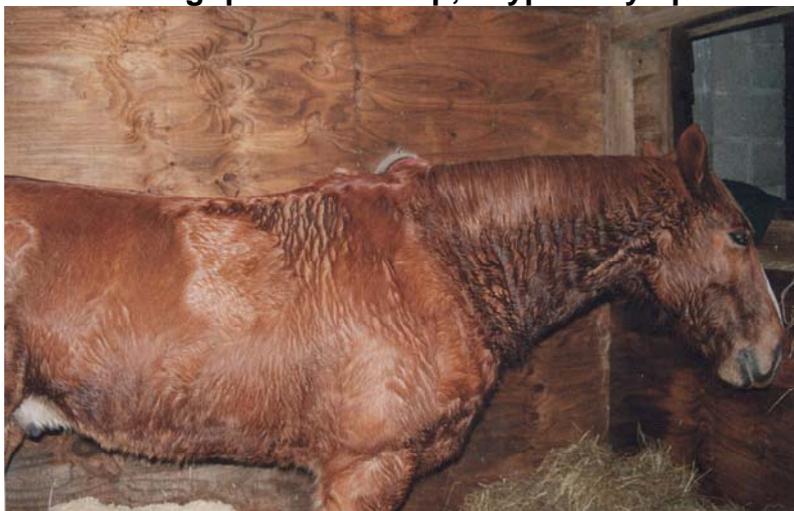
**He has rapidly lost weight, now looking quite gaunt compared to the chunky cob he was before.**



**A few days after he came home, he constantly sweated.**



**He is looking quite tucked up, a typical symptom.**



**Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December** (the day the vets are meant to be putting him down however are amazed with his slight progress so will come again in a couple of days).

**Girth 196cm, Heart Rate 50 bpm.**

Overnight: Ate all the food. Did 1 proper dropping at 9.30pm and another in the morning.

Breakfast: Didn't eat any.

Lunch: Fibre cubes that had been soaked all morning, stud mix, conditioning mix, molasses and oil.

Also ate a bowl of conditioning mix, stud mix and molasses.

Supper: Didn't eat any.

**Evening**

Ate 2 packets of polos and half a bowl of carrots.

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December**

Overnight: Did a few droppings.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of stud mix, conditioning mix, protein pellets and mint power. Ate it all.

Lunch: Ate rest of it overnight.

Ate approximately 30 carrots today, 2 mince pies and about 6 apples.

Supper: Sugar beet (not too much as bulky feed that can cause choke as is hard to swallow), 16+, conditioning mix and a bit of stud mix.

**Evening**

Left half a bucket of blended carrots. Did a small dropping.

Very perky when I checked him at 10pm. Sweating quite a lot today.

**Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December**

Overnight: 1 dropping.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of Cereal, protein pellets, stud mix with mint powder. Ate it all. Still sweating quite a lot.

Lunch: 1 bowl of Sugar beet, conditioning mix, stud mix and protein pellets. Ate it all.

Had about 30 carrots blended during the day.

Supper: 1 bowl of Sugar beet, 16+, stud mix and protein pellets,

**Evening**

Eaten all by 9pm. So gave him a small bowl of stud mix, conditioning mix, protein pellets, and molasses as a night snack! Also half a bowl of blended carrots.

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> December** (vet came)

**Girth 188cm. Heart rate 50 bpm.**

Overnight: Ate everything overnight. 1 dropping.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of Sugar beet, stud mix, protein pellets and conditioning mix. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of stud mix, protein pellets and conditioning mix. Ate it all.

Ate about 20 blended carrots. 1 dropping. Took him for a 5 minute walk and graze.

Supper: 1 bowl of sugar beet, 16+, stud mix, protein pellets, molasses and blended yogurt and hops. ½ bowl of blended carrots.

### **Evening**

By 10pm he had eaten everything. So gave him 1 bowl of sugar beet, stud mix, cereal, protein pellets and mint powder. 1 bowl of conditioning mix, protein pellets cereal and molasses.

### **Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December**

Overnight: ate everything. Did a small dropping.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of sugar beet, cereal, stud mix, protein pellets and mint powder. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of stud mix, conditioning mix, fibre cubes soaked with hot water molasses and protein pellets. Had about 30 carrots during the day. 15 of which I hand fed him unblended and he ate them with out doing the choke reflex he usually does.

Also bowl of stud mix, conditioning mix, protein pellets and mint powder.

Supper: 1 bowl of sugar beet, stud mix, pellets and cereal. Had ½ bowl of carrots.

### **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> December**

Overnight: Did a small dropping. Ate all food that I left.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of Cereal, protein pellets, stud mix, conditioning mix and mint powder. Ate rest of it overnight.

Lunch: 1 bowl of Build up mix, protein pellets, sugar beet and stud mix. Ate it all. 1 dropping during the day.

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, sugar beet, protein pellets and molasses. Had 2 half bowls of carrots 1 of which was unblended!

### **Evening**

Eaten all by 10pm so gave him 1 bowl of stud mix, protein pellets, 16+, build up.

### **Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> December**

Overnight: Ate all the food. Did 1 dropping.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of stud mix, 16+, build up, protein pellets, cereal and mint powder. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of sugar beet, build up and protein pellets. Ate it all. 2 droppings. 30 carrots, half not blended again.

Supper: 16+, sugar beet, protein pellets, stud mix, molasses, 2 blended carrots, yogurt and 2/3 handfuls of hops. Ate it all in one go! Half a bowl of blended carrots.

### **Evening**

Eaten everything so gave him 3/4 bowl of sugar beet, stud mix, 16+, build up, conditioning mix, cereal, oil and molasses

### **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December (vet came)**

**Girth 190cm. Heart rate 46bpm.**

Overnight: 1 dropping, ate all food.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of sugar beet, stud mix, build up, 16+, cereal, protein pellets, oil and mint powder.

Lunch: 1 bowl of sugar beet, build up, protein pellets and oil. Ate it all. Ate about 15 unblended carrots during the day.

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, sugar beet, protein pellets, yogurt blended with some hops and carrots, oil. Ate it all by 9pm.

### **Evening**

Gave him another feed about  $\frac{3}{4}$  bowl, bit of everything and  $\frac{1}{2}$  bucket of blended carrots.

## **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December**

Overnight: 2 droppings. Ate all of food.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of cereal, protein pellets, 16+, stud mix, grass pellets, build up, sugar beet, oil and mint powder. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, sugar beet, oil, protein pellets. Ate it all. During the day I hand fed him 20 carrots unblended. Also ate a mars bar, a mince pie and a packet of polos! Took him for a walk down the road for some grass. Did a dropping quite liquidy.

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, sugar beet, oil, protein pellets, yogurt blended with 3 carrots, hops and molasses.

### **Evening**

30 blended carrots, eaten all by 9pm, so I gave him 1 bowl of sugar beet, stud mix, build up, 16+, oil, protein pellets and cereal.

## **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December**

Overnight: Ate all food. Did 2 droppings.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of stud mix, 16+, build up, cereal, protein pellets, sugar beet, oil and mint powder. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, high-energy mix, protein pellets and oil. Ate it all. Had 20 carrots in the day. Took him for a walk, very energetic, he wanted to jump in the field with his friends. Had his usual mars bar and mince pie. 1 dropping at 5pm.

Supper: sugar beet, 16+, stud mix, oil, protein pellets, yogurt blended with 2 carrots, hops and molasses.

### **Evening**

Finished all feed by 9pm so made a feed with a bit of everything in large rubber bowl. Blended 30 carrots.

## **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December (Hardly sweating at all).**

Overnight: did 2 droppings. Ate all food.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of high-energy mix, 16+, build up, protein pellets, cereal, sugar beet and mint powder. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, high-energy mix, protein pellets, sugar beet and oil. Ate it all. Ate about 30 carrots during the day. Ate about  $\frac{1}{2}$  scoop of fibre cubes as treats. Ate chocolate digestives, mars bar, pack of polos and mince pie. Took him for a walk but tractor scared him so power walked me back to the yard! 1 dropping at 5pm.

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, high-energy mix, sugar beet, oil, molasses, protein pellets, yogurt blended with carrots and hops.

### **Evening**

30 carrots blended. Ate all his food by 9 so gave him a bit of everything as usual, about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a bucket.

**Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December** (vet came)

**Girth 195cm. Heart Rate 44.**

**Vet said he can be turned out for 20-30 minutes per day now and increase overtime dependent on progress!**

Overnight: 2 droppings. Ate all his food.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of build up, high-energy mix, 16+, cereal, pellets, oil, sugar beet and mint powder. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, high-energy mix, protein pellets, oil and sugar beet. Ate it all. Had 20 carrots during the day.

Had another feed at 3pm, bit of everything like his breakfast, ate it all. 1 dropping at 4pm.

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, protein pellets, sugar beet, molasses and blended hops and carrots.

**Evening**

Had to  $\frac{3}{4}$  bowls, one average one large, a variety of feed.  $\frac{3}{4}$  bucket of blended carrots.

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> December**

Overnight: 1 dropping during night. Ate all the food.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of sugar beet, 16+, high-energy mix, build up, protein pellets, mint powder and cereal. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, high-energy mix, sugar beet, protein pellets. Ate it all. 1 droppings during the day. Went in field for 30 minutes. He loved it, still less sweaty.

Supper: 1 bowl of sugar beet, 16+, protein pellets, molasses, high energy mix, yogurt and blended hops. Ate it all.

**Evening**

Left  $\frac{3}{4}$  of large bucket with a bit of everything in. 1 bowl of blended carrots.

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> December**

Overnight: 2 droppings during night. Ate all food.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of cereal, oil, pellets, 16+, build up, high-energy mix, sugar beet and mint powder. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, protein pellets, sugar beet, oil and high-energy mix. Ate it all. Ate 20 carrots during day. Turned out wouldn't come back in but would come in for a bucket of mix! Tired in the afternoon.

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, sugar beet, protein pellets, high-energy mix, oil, molasses and blended yogurt and carrots. Blended 25 carrots.

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup> December**

Overnight: 2 droppings during night.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of cereal, protein pellets, 16+, build up, high-energy mix, sugar beet and mint powder. Ate it all.

Lunch: build up, high-energy mix, protein pellets, sugar beet and oil. Ate it all. 1 dropping at 4pm. Blended 20 carrots. Turned him out for 30 minutes.

Supper: 16+, sugar beet, protein pellets, oil, molasses, blended yogurt, hops and carrots.

**Evening**

$\frac{3}{4}$  bowl of carrots, left another feed – a bit of everything  $\frac{3}{4}$  large bowl full.

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> December** (his stomach sensitive to brush)

Overnight: 2 droppings. Ate all food.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of cereal, protein pellets, 16+, build up, high-energy mix, sugar beet, mint powder and oil. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of sugar beet, build up and protein pellets. Ate it all. Had 20 carrots during the day.

Supper: Sugar beet, 16+, protein pellets, molasses, oil, yogurt blended with hops and carrots.

**Evening**

Large bucket with a bit of everything in. Also  $\frac{3}{4}$  bowl of blended carrots.

**Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> December**

Overnight: 2 droppings. Ate all food.

Breakfast: cereal, protein pellets, high-energy mix, 16+, build up, sugar beet, oil, mint powder and a handful of fibre cubes.

Lunch: bit of everything and another bowl of feed at 3pm. Half a bowl of blended carrots. Turned out for 30 minutes.

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, sugar beet, protein pellets, molasses, yogurt with blended hops and carrot. 1 large bowl  $\frac{3}{4}$  full of everything.

**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> December**

Overnight: 2 droppings overnight. Ate all of the large bowl and about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the average sized bowl.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of sugar beet, build up, high-energy mix, protein pellets, cereal, oil and mint powder.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, high-energy mix, sugar beet and protein pellets. Ate it all. Had a mars bar, mince pie, packet of polos and some apple treats. Went out into the field for 40mins.

Supper: 1 bowl  $\frac{3}{4}$  full with high-energy mix, 16+, protein pellets, sugar beet, molasses. In large bowl  $\frac{3}{4}$  full a bit of everything. Blended a small amount of carrots.

**Friday 24<sup>th</sup> December** (less sweaty) (vet came)

**Girth 194. Heart Rate 42.**

Overnight: 2/3 droppings overnight. Ate all of food.

Breakfast: protein pellets, cereal, barley, 16+, high-energy mix, sugar beet, build up and mint powder. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, sugar beet, barley, high-energy mix, protein pellets and oil. Ate it all. Ate mars bar, mince pies and polos!

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, sugar beet, barley, protein pellets, molasses, oil  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  large bowl of everything. Ate all of it.  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  bucket of blended carrots.

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> December** (-1°C) (a little more sweaty)

Overnight: 2/3 droppings.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of 16+, build up, high-energy mix, sugar beet, cereal, protein pellets, barley, oil and mint powder. Ate most of it.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, protein pellets, barley, sugar beet and oil. ½ a bucket of blended carrots. Ate it all. Ate mars bar, polos and mince pies. Had a bit of home made horse Christmas cake (course mix and syrup)

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, sugar beet, barley, protein pellets, build up and oil.

### **Evening**

1 large bowl of everything.

¾ bucket of blended carrots.

### **Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> December** (-1°C) (a little more sweaty)

Overnight: Ate all his food. 3 droppings. Temperature dropped in night ice etc.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of cereal, protein pellets, barley, sugar beet, high-energy mix, build up, 16+, mint powder and oil. Ate most of it.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, sugar beet, barley and protein pellets. Ate 2 mars bars, 1 mince pie and a packet of apples and polos. 1 bowl of carrots. Went out in the field for 50 minutes, spent most of the day eating, quite perky.

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, sugar beet, protein pellets, barley, molasses.

### **Evening**

1 large bowl scoop of everything.

### **Monday 27<sup>th</sup> December** (6°C) (sprayed legs with mite spray as stomping his legs a lot, prescribed by the vet). (Very sweaty during day)

Overnight: 3 droppings. Ate all of food.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of protein pellets, cereal, barley, build up, 16+, high-energy mix, sugar beet, mint powder and oil. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, sugar beet, protein pellets, barley and oil. Ate it all. Made him a kebab of carrots and apples to stop boredom. Also had polos and apples round edge of his stable. In field for 50 mins.

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, sugar beet, molasses, oil, barley, high-energy mix.

### **Evening**

1 large bowl of everything. 1 bowl of blended carrots.

### **Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> December** (very sweaty)

Overnight: 4 droppings. Ate all food.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of cereal, protein pellets, barley, 16+, build up, high-energy mix, sugar beet, oil, mint powder. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, sugar beet, barley, protein pellets and high-energy mix. Ate it all. Put polos and apples round edge of stable again. 1 dropping at 4pm. Turned out for 50-55 minutes.

Tea! 1 bowl of 16+, molasses, sugar beet, barley, protein pellets and high-energy mix.

Supper: Same as tea.

### **Evening**

1 Large bowl of everything. 1 bowl of blended carrots.

### **Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> December**

Overnight: 4 droppings. Ate all food.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of cereal, protein pellets, sugar beet, barley, high-energy mix, 16+, build up, mint powder and oil. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, high-energy mix, protein pellets, barley, sugar beet, and oil. Ate it all. Turned out with m/w rug on for 50-55 minutes. Ate

mince pies, mars bars and polos. Had apples and polos round his stable again.

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, molasses, sugar beet, barley, protein pellets, and oil.

**Evening**

1 large bowl of 16+, build up, high-energy mix, protein pellets, barley, sugar beet, oil and cereal.

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> December** (very mild) (his coat becoming very shiny and normal looking in places).

Overnight: 4 droppings. Ate all food.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of build up, high-energy mix, 16+, barley, sugar beet, protein pellets, cereal, oil and mint powder.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, sugar beet, barley, high-energy mix, protein pellets and oil. Ate it all. 1 dropping at 3pm. Turned out for just under an hour because he wouldn't be caught, had m/w rug on. Ate mars bars, mince pies and polos. 1 bowl of blended carrots.

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, sugar beet, barley, protein pellets, high-energy mix, molasses and oil.

**Evening**

1 large bowl of cereal, protein pellets, barley, sugar beet, 16+, build up, high-energy mix, oil, yogurt and carrots.

**Friday 31<sup>th</sup> December** (very mild)

**Girth 194cm.**

Overnight: sweated up but dry by the morning. 4-5 droppings.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of cereal, protein pellets, barley, sugar beet, 16+, build up, high-energy mix, oil and mint powder. Ate most of it.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, protein pellets, barley, sugar beet, high-energy mix. Ate most of it. Put polos and apples round his stable. 1 dropping at 3pm. Turned out for 1 hour 10 minutes.

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, oats, sugar beet, protein pellets, high-energy mix, oil, molasses, blended carrots and yogurt.

**Evening**

1 large bowl of cereal, barley, protein pellets, 16+, build up, high-energy mix, sugar beet and oil.  $\frac{3}{4}$  bowl of blended carrots.

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004** (mild and rainy)

Overnight: Ate all of food. 4 droppings. Sweaty in the night but dried off in the day.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of cereal, oats, protein pellets, 16+, build up, high-energy mix, sugar beet, oil and mint powder. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, high-energy mix, sugar beet, protein pellets and barley. Ate it all. Went in the field for 1 hour 15 minutes. 1 dropping at 4pm. Ate 2 mars bars, 1 mince pie, 1 bag of apples and a packet of polos.

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, sugar beet, oats, protein pellets, high-energy mix, yogurt blended with carrots.

**Evening**

1 large bowl of 16+, build up, high-energy mix, barley, protein pellets, cereal, sugar beet and oil.

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> January (pony kicked him around the gut area but seemed ok)** (coat looking very good).

Overnight: didn't sweat overnight. 5 droppings. Ate all food.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of sugar beet, oats, protein pellets, 16+, build up, high-energy mix, oil and mint powder. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, sugar beet, high-energy mix, barley, protein pellets and oil. 1 dropping at 4pm. Turned out for 1 hour 20mins. Ate mars bar, mince pies and chocolate digestives! No carrots left.

Supper: 1 bowl of sugar beet, 16+, oats, protein pellets, high-energy mix and yogurt.

**Evening**

1 large bowl of barley, protein pellets, cereal, 16+, build up, high-energy mix, oil and sugar beet.

**Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> January** (shaved chin hair as matted and sprayed mite spray again, a little more sweaty).

**Girth 195cm.**

Overnight: Ate all food. 4 droppings.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of cereal, protein pellets, oats, 16+, build up, high-energy mix, sugar beet, oil and mint powder. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, high-energy mix, sugar beet, barley, protein pellets and oil. No carrots left still. Had 2 mars bars, bag of apples, polos, mince pie and milk chocolate buttons! 1 dropping at 4pm. In field for 1 hour 25 minutes.

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, oats, protein pellets, high-energy mix, sugar beet, oil molasses and yogurt.

**Evening**

1 Large bowl of cereal, protein pellets, barley, sugar beet, 16+, build up, high-energy mix and oil.

**Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> January** (quite mild with slight chill, quite sweaty)

Overnight: 4 droppings. Ate all food.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of cereal, protein pellets, oats, 16+, build up, high-energy mix, sugar beet, oil and mint powder. Ate it all very quickly.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, high-energy mix, protein pellets, barley, sugar beet and oil. Ate it all. Turned out for 1 hour 40 minutes. 1 bowl of blended carrots. Ate it all. Had mars bar, mince pie and polos. Also put apples round edge of stable again.

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, high-energy mix, protein pellets, barley, sugar beet, oil, molasses, carrots and yogurt.

**Evening**

1 large bowl of high-energy mix, 16+, build up, cereal, protein pellets, oats, sugar beet and oil.

**Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> January** (quite cold, perky but shaking his head a lot, mites in his ears maybe?)

Overnight: sweated a lot, ate all food, 4 droppings.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of cereal, pellets, oats, sugar beet, 16+, build up, high-energy mix, oil and mint powder. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of barley, high-energy mix, build up, protein pellets, sugar beet and oil. Ate it all. Turned out for 1 hour 50 minutes. Had 2 mars bars, 1 mince pie, carrots and a bag of apples.

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, high-energy mix, barley, sugar beet, protein pellets, oil, molasses, yogurt and blended carrot.

### **Evening**

1 large bowl of cereal, oats, pellets, 16+, build up, high-energy mix, sugar beet and oil. 1 bowl of blended carrots. Put slices of apples and polos around edge of stable.

### **Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> January** (windy and quite cold, quite sweaty)

Overnight: Ate all bowls left some carrot but ate rest during day. 3 droppings.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of cereal, protein pellets, oats, build up, high-energy mix, sugar beet, oil and mint powder. Ate most of it, finished rest in afternoon.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, high-energy mix, barley, protein pellets, sugar beet and oil. Ate most of it, left rest in there overnight. Turned out for 2 hours. Ate 2 mars bars and 4 digestive biscuits.

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, barley, protein pellets, high-energy mix, sugar beet, molasses and carrots blended with hops.

### **Evening**

1 large bowl of cereal, oats, protein pellets, 16+, build up, high-energy mix, sugar beet and oil. Had  $\frac{3}{4}$  bowl of blended carrot.

### **Friday 7<sup>th</sup> January** (weather mild, less sweaty, tried to cut mats off on back legs)

Overnight: 3 droppings, ate all food.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of cereal, protein pellets, oats, sugar beet, build up, high-energy mix, oil and mint powder. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of barley, protein pellets, build up, high-energy mix, sugar beet and oil. Ate it all. In field for 3 hours. Ate mars bar and digestive biscuits. 1 dropping at 1pm and 1 at 4pm.

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, protein pellets, oats, sugar beet, oil, high-energy mix, blended carrots and yogurt.

### **Evening**

1 large bowl of barley, protein pellets, 16+, build up, high-energy mix, sugar beet, oil and cereal.  $\frac{1}{2}$  bowl of carrots.

### **Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> January** (quite cold and windy, his coat nearly dry and not actively sweating).

#### **Girth 196cm.**

Overnight: 5 droppings. Ate all his food.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of everything. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of everything. Ate it all. Also had mars bars, carrots and biscuits. Went in the field for 2 hours 45 minutes. 1 dropping at 4pm.

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, sugar beet, No.17 conditioning mix, protein pellets, oats, carrots, oil and yogurt.

### **Evening**

1 large bowl of cereal, protein pellets, barley, sugar beet, 16+, build up, No.17 cond mix and oil.  $\frac{1}{2}$  bowl of blended carrots.

**Sunday 9th January** (very windy and rainy in afternoon, quite sweaty on neck)

Overnight: 4 droppings, ate all food.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of cereal, pellets, oats, No.17 mix, 16+, build up, sugar beet, (no oil left) and mint powder. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, stud mix, No.17 mix, sugar beet, barley, protein pellets, ate  $\frac{3}{4}$  of it so left rest in overnight. Ate chocolate buttons, horse treats and a mince pie. Turned out for 2 hours 45 minutes.

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, No.17 mix, sugar beet, oats, protein pellets, molasses, blended carrot and yogurt.

### **Evening**

1 large bowl of sugar beet, barley, No.17 mix, stud mix, oats, protein pellets, 16+ and build up.  $\frac{1}{2}$  bucket of blended carrots.

**Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January (vet came)** (very mild, very sweaty)

**Girth 194cm. Heart rate 40-42 bpm.**

Overnight: 5 droppings. Didn't eat the left over lunch but ate all of supper, carrots and evening feeds.

Breakfast: 1 bowl of cereal, pellets, oats, stud mix, No.17 mix, sugar beet, 16+, build up, mint powder. Ate it all.

Lunch: 1 bowl of build up, sugar beet, No.17 mix, barley and protein pellets. Ate  $\frac{3}{4}$  of it.

Supper: 1 bowl of 16+, protein pellets, barley, oats, No.17 mix, molasses, yogurt and blended carrots.

### **Evening**

1 Large bowl of stud mix, No.17 mix, 16+, protein pellets, barley, oats, sugar beet, cereal and build up.  $\frac{3}{4}$  bowl of blended carrots.

**The vet has advised to gradually cut the food down now, as he is now quite overweight! Together we devised this menu, and I will gradually eliminate certain foods to cut the amount consumed.**

### **Breakfast**

$\frac{1}{2}$  scoop cereal  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  scoop protein pellets  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  scoop No17 conditioning mix  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  stud mix  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  scoop response  
1 scoop oats  
 $1\frac{1}{2}$  scoop sugar beet  
1 measure of mint powder  
Splash of oil

### **Lunch**

1 scoop build up  
1  $\frac{1}{2}$  scoop sugar beet  
1 scoop barley  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  scoop of protein pellets

½ scoop of No.17 conditioning mix  
1 scoop response  
Splash of oil

### **Supper x2**

#### Normal bowl

1 scoop 16+  
½ scoop oats  
½ scoop barley  
1 ½ scoops sugar beet  
½ protein pellets  
Splash of molasses  
½ scoop No.17 conditioning mix  
½ scoop response  
Splash of oil

#### Large bowl

½ scoop cereal  
½ scoop 16+  
½ scoop protein pellets  
3 scoops sugar beet  
½ scoop No.17 conditioning mix  
½ scoop stud mix  
1 scoop oats  
1 scoop barley  
½ scoop build up  
½ scoop response  
Splash of oil

½ -1 bowl of blended carrots.

### **Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January** (Very sweaty, mane dripping, sweat dry by evening.)

Overnight: 3 droppings. Ate all food.

Breakfast: Ate it all.

Lunch: Ate it all.

Droppings: 3

Supper x2: Ate it all. Also had ½ bucket of blended carrots.

### **Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January** (damp but not too sweaty, lying down a lot but showing no further signs of colic).

Overnight: 3 droppings, 4 urine patches.

Breakfast: Ate it all.

Lunch: Ate half of it. Left it in overnight.

Droppings: 2

Supper x2: Ate all of it and half bucket of blended carrots.

### **Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> January** (a bit sweaty)

Overnight: 3-4 droppings, didn't finish off left over lunch.

Breakfast: Ate it all.

Lunch: Ate it all.  
Droppings: 2  
Supper x2: Ate most of it a little bit left.

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> January** (quite/very sweaty)  
**Girth 196cm.**

Overnight: 4 droppings, 3 urine patches.  
Breakfast: Parsnips before and ate it all.  
Lunch: Ate it all.  
Droppings: 3  
Supper x2: Didn't eat it all.

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> January** (very sweaty, lying down a lot).

Overnight: 5 droppings  
Breakfast: Ate it all.  
Lunch: only ate half, used leftovers in supper x1.  
Supper x2: Ate it all and  $\frac{3}{4}$  bowl of blended carrots overnight.

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> January** (very sweaty)

Overnight: 5 droppings  
Breakfast: Ate it all.  
Lunch: Ate it all. Went out for 1½ hours.  
Supper: Ate it all and  $\frac{3}{4}$  bowl of blended carrots.

**Monday 17<sup>th</sup> January** (quite sweaty but drying off)

Overnight: 5-6 droppings and lots of urine patches.  
Breakfast: Ate it all.  
Lunch: Ate most of it then finished it overnight  
Droppings: 2  
Supper: Ate most of it and blended carrots but finished it during following day.

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> January** (a little sweaty, mainly damp)

Overnight: 4-5 droppings  
Breakfast: had a smaller breakfast as some supper left over to finish.  
Lunch: Ate it all.  
Droppings: 3  
Supper: left half of the large bowl but ate the rest and carrots.

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> January** (no sweat in morning got quite sweaty by evening)

**Girth 197cm.**  
Overnight: 4 droppings.  
Breakfast: Ate it all.  
Lunch: Ate it all.  
Droppings: 2  
Supper: used last night's leftovers to make x1 supper.



**He has got quite overweight now, but this is a positive improvement.**



**His coat on his body is showing massive improvements.**



**Still looking very sweaty in some areas especially his neck and face.**



**Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> January** (a little sweaty mainly just sticky)

Overnight: 4-5 droppings, ate average sized bowl of supper but left 1/3 of large bowl. Finished off during the day though.

Breakfast: Ate it all.

Lunch: Ate most of it.

Droppings: 7

Supper: Ate all except ½ of big bowl.

**Friday 21<sup>st</sup> January** (a little sweaty)

Overnight: 5 droppings overnight

Breakfast: Ate it all.

Lunch: Ate half of it. Turned out for 1½ hours, cheeky to get in! Ate 1 mars bar and a chocolate biscuit.

Droppings: 2

Supper: used leftovers of lunch to make supper x1. Mixed polos into both suppers. Blended ½ bowl of carrots. Lying down but perky in himself, still only a little sweaty.

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> January** (quite/very sweaty)

Overnight: 4 droppings, 1/3 of large bowl left.

Breakfast: Ate all of breakfast.

Lunch: Ate some of it. Turned out for 2 hours. Gave him apples.

Droppings: 3

Supper: mixed rest of lunch into x1 supper. Threw last nights leftovers away. Made x2 supper as normal.

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> January** (quite/very sweaty)

Overnight: 7 droppings.

Breakfast: Ate rest of supper and breakfast.

Lunch: Ate ½ of it. Eating some hay. Sweat drying.

Droppings: 1

Supper: Used rest of lunch to make x1 supper, large bowl as normal.

**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> January** (quite sweaty)

**Girth 196cm.**

Overnight: 3 droppings, 1/3 of large bowl supper left but left it in.

Breakfast: Ate it all and last nights leftovers.

Lunch: Ate some of it. Had 6 chocolate biscuits, 2 mars bars and 4 apples.

Droppings: 0, kicking his stomach in afternoon so probably has stomach ache as not passing many droppings.

Supper: Used leftover lunch to make x1 supper. Not sweaty now all dried.

**Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> January** (quite sweaty)

Overnight: 4-5 droppings. Few handfuls left of supper

Breakfast: Ate it all. Very active, tied him outside eating hay whilst I mucked out.

Lunch: Ate it all. Ate 1 mars bar and some chocolate buttons. Blended ½ bucket of carrots. Gave him apples.

Droppings: 3

Supper: Ate all of it apart from ½ supper of small bowl.

**Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> January** (very sweaty, mane dripping)

Overnight: 4 droppings

Breakfast: Ate it all, also finished leftover supper.

Lunch: Ate some of it. ½ bucket of blended carrots. Had biscuits and mars bar.

Droppings: 2

Supper: made large bowl supper with lunch leftovers.

**Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> January** (quite sweaty, mane wet)

Overnight: 4 droppings. ¼ supper left.

Breakfast: Ate it all.

Lunch: Ate it all.

Droppings: 4

Supper: ate it all apart from 1/3 of large bowl.

**Friday 28<sup>th</sup> January** (quite/very sweaty)

Overnight: 4 droppings

Breakfast: Ate it all

Lunch: Ate it all. Had 4 brushes.

Droppings: 5

Supper: Ate it all.

**Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> January**

Overnight: 3 droppings. Eaten all of hay.

Breakfast: Ate it all

Lunch: Ate ½ of it. 4 brushes during day.

Droppings: 1

Supper: used leftovers of lunch. Bowl of blended carrots.

**Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> January** (quite/very sweaty, very perky)

**Girth 202cm.**

Overnight: 4 droppings, 1/3 of big bowl supper left. Ate all of hay.

Breakfast: Ate it all.

Lunch: Ate it all. Lots of brushes. Gave him banana lickit to play with.

Droppings: 1

Supper: left ½ of supper.

**Monday 31<sup>st</sup> January** (mite sprayed his front legs, quite sweaty)

Overnight: 3 droppings, eaten some hay.

Breakfast: Ate it all, tied him on the fence whilst I mucked out.

Lunch: Ate half of it. Had ¼ bucket of carrots. Ate 3 chocolate biscuits, polos and apples.

Droppings: 1

Supper: used left over lunch to make supper.

**Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February** (Quite sweaty)

Overnight: 5 droppings. Ate all his food. Eaten some hay.

Breakfast: Ate all food.

Lunch: Ate all food.

Droppings: 6

Supper: Fresh supper as ate all food in day. Gave him some carrots. Not so sweaty but very damp.

**Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February** (not too sweaty, drying off but damp).

Overnight: 4-5 droppings. Ate all his supper.

Breakfast: Ate all food.

Lunch: Ate all food. Very frisky going out to the field.

Droppings: 5 droppings.

Supper: Gave him fresh supper.

**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> February** (very sweaty but also very perky).

Overnight: 5 droppings. Ate all supper and some hay.

Breakfast: Ate it all. Gave him a lickit to play with- all gone in evening!

Lunch: Ate it all, raining so didn't go out. Ate chocolate digestives, carrots, apples and polos.

Droppings: 4

Supper: Ate it all.

**Friday 4<sup>th</sup> February** (Very sweaty, dripping wet)

Overnight: 5 droppings

Breakfast: Ate all food, also had carrots when tied on fence whilst I mucked out.

Lunch: Ate it all. Had some more carrots and some chocolate digestives and polos.

Droppings: 4

Supper: Ate all of it.

**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> February** (sweat dried now just sticky)

Overnight: 2-3 droppings.

Breakfast: Ate all of it.

Lunch: Ate all of it and an extra bowl of food.

Droppings: 8

Supper: Eaten most of the extra bowl but made him a fresh supper and left leftovers in there. Ate a slice of hay.

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> February** (quite sweaty, sticky, brushed his mats gently with a metal scrapper).

Overnight: 3 droppings. Ate all supper and leftovers.

Breakfast: Ate it all.

Lunch: Ate it all. Had ½ bowl of carrots. Also had chocolate digestives and a mars bar. In field for 1½ hours.

Droppings: 0 (kicking his belly all day think he needs to go to the toilet).

Supper: Ate all his food.

My in detail diary finished here because he was keeping the weight on even though I had cut down his food dramatically since the beginning of January. He was still having off days when he didn't do many droppings but these became increasingly fewer and the amount he produced became more consistent. These were still recorded daily until late March. The amount of time he was turned out was gradually increased each week, dependent on his progress.

Below illustrates what his food was eventually cut down to by the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2005. This is what the vet advised to feed, and to cut it down again gradually to what used to be his normal feed, sugar beet, mollichaff, and conditioning mix. The other types of food will be cut down and then completely cut out when the sack runs out as long as he gets plenty of carrots. Apples should be given in moderation as the acidity may cause colic.

### **Breakfast**

½ scoop cereal

½ scoop response

1 handful oats

½ scoop chaff

1 scoop sugar beet

1 measure mint powder

Big splash of oil.

### **Supper**

½ scoop conditioning mix

½ scoop 16+

½ scoop chaff

1 scoop sugar beet

1 measure garlic

Big splash of oil.

## **Overview**

Looking after Chester was both mentally and physically stressful and it was important that I looked after myself as well as Chester. Throughout the diary I have explained the feed that I gave him and how much he consumed each day. It looks easy but I can assure you I could never just put a feed in front of him and expect him to touch it. Every feed I had to water down to a 'soup' so that he could swallow it comfortably and then hand feed it to him, sometimes using treats to get him to eat it. As you can imagine with the amount of food I was trying to feed him it felt like I was feeding him all day! Feeding him small amounts of the feed and often proved to be the best method. All my time from about 7am in the morning till 11pm at night was spent looking after Chester, whether I was feeding him, continuously brushing him, blending carrots, hand feeding him hay, occasionally walking him down the road for some grass or just sitting in his stable with him.

Although Chester was not rapidly deteriorating and he was gradually showing signs of improvement there was never a guarantee that he wouldn't deteriorate. This was one of the hardest things to come to terms with, that there was a high possibility that I could lose him at any time. Chester was one of the lucky ones to survive and many chronic cases do not survive, despite the very best care and attention.

## **February 2007**

Chester is leading a nearly normal life; he is turned out in the day (in a field on the opposite side of the farm where there has been to date no history of grass sickness) from 6.30am till 5pm then he is stabled overnight. He is fed a scoop of course mix, a scoop of pony nuts and a handful of sugar beet and mollichaff with a splash of oil twice a day. I have to clip his belly, hind legs and neck still as he still sweats and his coat gets extremely matted and itchy even though it's brushed daily. I have been riding him for a year now once/twice a week, just out for a walk and a trot or a light bit of schooling.

## **At Present April 2007**

Chester's workload has gradually increased to hacks of an hour walking, trotting and a canter. When I school him he can now manage 40 minutes of walk and trot and canter. He has so much more energy now and is feeling very well in himself, he has even managed to buck me off the little devil! He is fed  $\frac{1}{4}$  scoop of course mix and pony nuts, and a handful of sugarbeet and chaff once a day with a splash of oil. However his fatigue varies but I never push him, we probably will never be able to compete again but his fitness overtime may keep improving. I am very lucky that he is still in my life, and as long as he remains very happy, that is where he will always stay. In September 2007 I am commencing a degree in Veterinary Nursing Science.



February 2007



September 2006



A light bit of schooling  
September 2006



February 2007 his designer clip  
to avoid matting on his belly, neck  
and hind quarters.



His sweat free neck and shiny  
conditioned coat. February 2007.

### **Many Thanks to:**

**My Parents:** for all their support both financially and emotionally, they would have done anything to help me give Chester his life back.

**O' Gorman Slater and Main Veterinary Surgery (Newbury):** In particular to Jo Munting who offered her help and advice all hours of the day even in her personal time. Also, for publishing my diary on your website so that it can be accessed by other owners affected, I know it would have been immensely helpful if I had read one at the beginning.

**Downside Farm:** In particular to Craig and Marilyn for accommodating Chester's special requirements. When he was ill they waited for me to leave at night (around 11pm) before putting the alarms on. They offered their support all hours of the day especially at Christmas, inviting me into their home when I could leave Chester for an hour. He is now only turned out in the non-effected fields and great care is taken regarding Chester when the fields have to be fertilised.

**Ashley Head:** (at the time only 12 years old) took great interest in Chester's well being and gave him love and attention whenever she could when he was unwell. When I eventually had to go back to boarding school and sit my AS Level exams in May/June 2005 she looked after him after school for me at the final stages of his rehabilitation. This meant she had to monitor irregular food intake, droppings, sweating and reoccurring symptoms, whilst brushing him regularly and mucking out. Not to mention the endless blending of carrots still! Her effort and dedication alone will take her to the area of work she wishes to pursue in the future with animals.

**The Equine Grass Sickness Fund:** For all their positive feedback and information about the illness. This gave me the inspiration to create a treatment plan and at least try to nurse him through it. I have reported Chester's case to EGSF via their website. [www.grasssickness.org.uk](http://www.grasssickness.org.uk) If you have not yet reported a case please contact the EGSF as this is an essential part of research.

**Equifeeds:** For all their help, patience and advice in selecting and supplying the wide range of feed on a weekly basis.