

A celebrity diet

2017
WINTER FEEDING
SPECIAL

Keeping competition horses in peak condition through the winter can be a challenge. *Stephanie Bateman* delves into the diets of three top horses to see how they are fed



Ballaghmor Class is a good eater but can be 'hot' to ride, so his diet is specially formulated to be low in starch to reduce the chance of heated behaviour

THE EVENTER

Horse: Ballaghmor Class (Thomas)

Rider: Oliver Townend

Key stats: 10-year-old 16.2hh grey Irish sport horse gelding (by Courage II) owned by Angela Hislop, Karyn Shuter, Val Ryan and Peter Ryan.

Career résumé: winner of Burghley Horse Trials 2017, member of the British Nations Cup gold-medal winning team in Aachen 2017, fourth at Tattersalls CCI3* 2017 and 11th at Burnham Market CIC3* 2017.

Winter routine: "Thomas is currently enjoying a well-deserved holiday, which consists of daily turnout in his own grass paddock for approximately six to eight weeks," says Oliver Townend's head girl Rebecca Evans. "He goes out after his first feed at

6.30am and comes back in at 4pm. When his holiday finishes, he is then steadily brought back into work, with the introduction of light roadwork, followed by schooling in the arena as well as jump days, fitness work on the lunge and gallop work. He is turned out every day, weather permitting."

Feeding plan: "Thomas' feeding regime consists of a tailored diet formulated by Gain Equine Nutrition. His feeds are split up into three feeds a day — 6.30am, 1pm and 5pm — fed in a rubber feed bucket on the floor.

"Each feed is made up of Opti-Care Balancer, Freedom Cubes, Infinity Stabilised Rice Bran, chaff (to increase chew time and the production of saliva to help maintain a healthy gut environment) and soaked sugar beet.

"Thomas' weight and condition are closely monitored by both Oliver and the staff, particularly during the event season and

the build-up to a big event. When he is in full competition work, he receives a fourth feed in the evening, which is made up of the same ingredients as his regular feeds.

"In addition, all the supplements he receives, such as Stride, GNF (Gut Nutrition Formula), Isopro and linseed oil are all provided by TRM to ensure gastrointestinal health and healthy joints.

"Thomas also receives ad-lib haylage in a haynet both day and night."

The quirks: "Due to Thomas' hot character, his feeds are low in starch to reduce the chance of any heated behaviour, and all dietary changes are overseen by Oliver to ensure he is getting the right nutrients for his workload.

"He is a good eater and knows exactly when it is feeding time as he is usually always first to be fed and he doesn't let any food go to waste."