

The Use of Performance Journals to Measure the Utility of SUCCEED™ Digestive Conditioning Program™

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Overview: The world of equine nutritional supplements is full of products marketed to support a wide range of functions and body structures or to treat a variety of symptoms. Often the improvements claimed by these products are subjective, difficult to determine, or vague, making it difficult for the average supplement user to determine utility. Further, the tools for determining utility are often lacking, and customers are simply left with their own subjective opinions.

The fact is that product utility, or value derived from product usage, is often a function of the perceptions and attitudes of the users. Research designed to quantify those perceptions is one commonly used method for assessing a product's utility and value.

SUCCEED™ Digestive Conditioning Program™ is a functional feed designed to support proper and efficient digestive function, as well as overall digestive tract health and immunity. Research has indicated that performance horses live with a variety of digestive issues as a regular condition, including parasitism, colic, and gastric and colonic ulcers. Any of these can affect appearance and performance of a horse, and may also be linked to a variety of other issues including the horse's ability to focus and bad stall behaviors. Equine supplements that claim to address individual symptoms may fail to address the underlying causes of those symptoms, and thus may not be truly effective.

The purpose of this experiment was to use a Performance Journal - a simple, objective survey tool - to allow individual participants to assess the utility of the SUCCEED digestive conditioning program during a 30 day trial period.

Methods: Participating horse owners and trainers were randomly selected for a 30 day trial period of SUCCEED Digestive Conditioning Program. Participants were asked to complete a performance journal before beginning the program. After the journal was completed, participants received a 30 day supply of SUCCEED in either paste or granular form. After feeding SUCCEED for 30 days, a second journal

was completed and both journals were returned for analysis. Journal questions included information on age, breed, discipline, and current feeding and medication programs. Additionally, participants were asked to rate satisfaction regarding the horse's appetite, performance, coat, stamina, race/work recovery, alertness, and temperament, using a five point scale. Finally, horses were rated from 0 to 5 on body condition score. All collected journals were averaged, 30 day differences were determined, and differences were tested for statistical significance by student T test. No completed journals were left out of the summary results presented here.

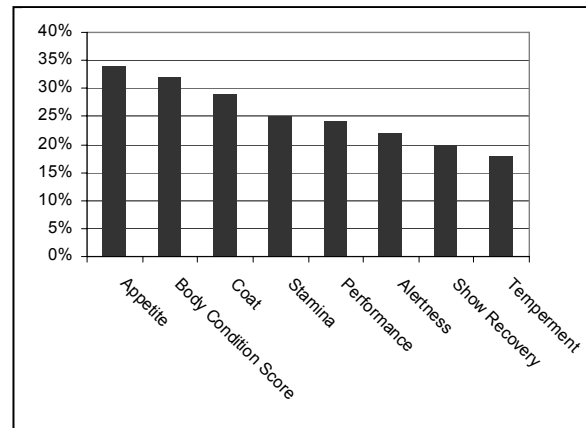


Figure 1. Utility of SUCCEED Digestive Conditioning Program based on participant response to survey. Graph reflects the average improvement in surveyed factor after 30 day use of SUCCEED. All improvements were statistically significant ($p \leq 0.05$).

Results: These results comprise a study group of 114 animals, average age of 8 years. The study group consisted of a mixture of sexes and breeds from locations across the US. Results in figure 1 indicate the average improvement of the surveyed factor after 30 day's use of SUCCEED Digestive Conditioning Program. The largest reported improvements were seen in observed appetite (34%), body condition score (32%), and coat quality (29%). All reported

improvements were statistically significant ($p \leq 0.05$) as analyzed by student's T test.

Discussion: It is often difficult to assess the utility of a change in feeding program or the addition of a supplement to a feeding program. Often, feed supplements are used to address symptoms as if they are independent, unrelated occurrences. However, a variety of conditions may often be related through a common root issue relating to digestive tract health and digestive efficiency. By addressing the main issue of digestive tract health and performance, these other issues may resolve themselves.

Previous research on SUCCEED Digestive Conditioning Program indicates that the product can support a healthy digestive process and structure, by supporting tissue repair and integrity, and good immunity. With a healthy digestive tract a horse is more likely to have a healthy appetite, absorb nutrients effectively, and maintain weight. Because the digestive tract is responsible for the breakdown of feed, absorption of nutrients, and production of energy sources utilized throughout the body, it is also reasonable to suggest that a healthy, properly functioning digestive tract will more likely correlate with a healthy appearance and body condition, healthy performance and stamina, and good attitudes toward work. By addressing the digestive tract structure and function, it is believed that use of SUCCEED may result in improvements in all of these areas.

Since conditions of external appearance, temperament, behavior and performance are inherently subjective, it is meaningful to assess the perceptions of the horse's owner or trainer with regards to these issues. Further, since many of these issues have become common in performance horses, improvements over the course of 30 days may often go unnoticed. By providing a mechanism for assessing these conditions, the horse owner or trainer may be given a greater opportunity to observe and recognize

even subtle changes. Further, while the journals were provided to the participants, it is important to note that all journals were completed independently by the participants, who recorded their own observations and perceptions.

The compiled results of these journals show statistically significant improvements in visual observations of external features and conditions that may be directly affected by GI health. As such, and because the product contains natural feed ingredients that support the GI tract through nutritional means, the survey results do confirm other results indicating that SUCCEED Digestive Conditioning Program supports digestive health, providing additional support for the product's utility. Further, and perhaps more importantly, the value of the product to users – horse owners and trainers – is derived from the external benefits of digestive health, rather than just the characteristics of digestive health in and of themselves. Those benefits include the types of appearance and performance issues assessed through the journals. Because those benefits are a function of the user's perceptions and observations, these survey results do suggest value in the product and confirm product utility in terms that are most relevant to users.

References:

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