

## Forage-only diets for racing trotters

**At Rogestad Lillgård outside Linköping Åsa Waern and her husband Jonas produce high quality haylage for horses at 23 hectares. They also train and race their three Standardbred trotters. They feed their horses forage from their own production and don't feed any concentrate. If the forage has sufficient energy and protein values it can cover the horse's requirements.**

Rogestadfoder is run by Waerns Lantbruk and is a family business. They produce haylage to professional and amateur trotting trainers and to breeders of both trotters and riding horses for competing and leisure.

In addition to producing forage they train their trotters themselves and they are doing really well. Their mare Greby Anna, born 2006 after Enjoy Lavec, has been with them since the end of 2012 and the results for 2013 so far shows 1-3-1 with 6820 euro gained on those three races. But that's not all, Greby Anna beat her personal record three times in a row on these three races! At Mantorp March 18 she won at 14,6a over 1640 m, at Solvalla April 3 she improved that time for the same distance to 13,6a which got her a third place. The latest victory was at V65 at Axevalla April 30, then she ran another new personal record at 15,4a over the distance 2140 m.



Here is Greby Anna at Axevalla April 30. Photographer is Kjell Hedvall.

For all horses it's important with lots of forage and Greby Anna's daily forage intake is about 17 kg per day of Rogestad's own produced haylage. She can eat as much as she wants and the haylage she gets has a DM content of 65% which means that she consumes about 11 kg DM per day. (DM = dry matter) Greby Anna is a rather large horse and she weighs about 500 kg and therefore she gets up to 2.2 kg DM forage per 100 kg body weight and day. Free access to forage of suitable quality works excellent for many horses. If one has to limit the daily forage ration 1.5 – 2.0 kg DM per 100 kg body weight and day is appropriate.



Greby Anna is provided forage in portions outside in her paddock, when it's empty it's refilled so she can eat as much as she wants. Photographer is Åsa Waern.

Greby Anna's forage contains 10.2 MJ metabolizable energy per kg DM and 63 g digestible crude protein per kg DM. This means that Greby Anna consumes 112.2 MJ metabolizable energy and 693 g digestible crude protein per day which covers her daily requirements of energy and protein when she is training and racing.

At Rogestad they send their forage for analysis, also for mineral content, and since Greby Anna's forage covers also her mineral requirements her diet is only supplemented with salt and selenium.

Our horses are very calm, even when we are travelling and racing with them, they can stand in the box almost sleeping and eats well after the

races, says Åsa Waern. The fact that horses can have a calmer temperament when they eat only forage has also been observed in scientific studies. For more on this topic take a look in the "Archive feeding" here at [www.forageforhorses.com](http://www.forageforhorses.com).

The second trotter at Rogestad; Hickory Smash, born 2006 after Smasher, is unfortunately recovering from a back injury. The third trotter is Rogestadkungen, born 2009 after Zerberus (DE), he is born and raised on the farm and he also eats as much forage per day as Greby Anna and no concentrate.



Hickory Smash and Rogestadkungen seem to be cool guys that like to take a break in the sun. Photographer is Åsa Waern.

Rogestadkungen is basically reared on only forage, the exception is when the forage has had too low protein values and had to be complemented. He has grown very evenly and symmetrically and our horses always have really good hoof quality, says Åsa Waern.

Rogestadkungen has done a good baby race and after that a first race resulting in fourth place. At Mantorp last Sunday, May 12, he did his second race and added a second place to his racing results! He did a good race, he had the lead almost all the way and finished at 17,9 over the distance 2140 m.

Åsa tells me how their breeding mares are round and nice and produces big and nice foals. They also eat only forage and they get forage from Rogestad's own production that has higher protein content. It

has a ratio of 8.2 g digestible crude protein per MJ compared to the racing trotters' forage that has a ratio of 6.2 g digestible crude protein per MJ. Breeding mares and growing horses have higher protein requirements and therefore needs forage with higher protein concentration.

As forage producers Åsa and Jonas Waern gets many questions from customers about price per kg feed and per kg DM. They spend a lot of time explaining to new customers that different forage contain different amounts of dry matter and water and one should not have to pay for the water. Therefore one needs to know the forage DM content and use price per kg DM when comparing prices between different forage. Read more about kg feed and kg dry matter in "Archive forage" here at [www.forageforhorses.com](http://www.forageforhorses.com). Also other factors affect the price on forage – nutritive content, number of layers plastic film, bale size etc.

If you want to know more about Rogestad Lillgård, their forage, horses and sheep you can visit [www.rogestadfoder.se](http://www.rogestadfoder.se) (in Swedish).



We wish Greby Anna good luck in her future career on the racetrack! Photographer is Malin Waern.

Åsa and Jonas Waern shows the importance of high quality forage and that forage of high nutritive value can cover the requirements also for racing horses, breeding mares and growing horses. We look forward to continue following their horses at the racetracks!

Text: Sara Muhonen