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**THE ENERGY REQUIREMENTS OF PERFORMANCE HORSES IN TRAINING**

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**ABSTRACT**

The aim of this study was to estimate the energy requirements of performance horses in active, variable training in the field. Sixty horses in England and Switzerland were measured over two-week periods, and for fifteen of these the measurement period was extended, ranging from 21 to 42 weeks. Energy intake was estimated by measuring daily feed consumption. Energy output was measured using heart rate monitors during 608 training sessions, relating heart rate (HR) to VO₂ and converting VO₂ to energy. Field maintenance requirements were calculated by deducting the marginal energy cost of training from energy input. The mean field maintenance expenditure for performance horses with a normal temperament was found to be 0.118 MJ of metabolisable energy (ME) / kg of bodyweight (BW) / day (SD = 0.008, CI = 0.005, *n* = 60 horses). This result is between 1.9% (*P* = 0.086) and 20.9% (*P* < 0.001) greater than the official guidance found in the US, France, Germany and Holland. Heart rate monitoring of training revealed a mean energy expenditure / ridden session of 0.023 MJ ME (SD = 0.001, CI = 0.001, *n* = 175 training sessions). The mean daily energy expenditure for exercise based on a full week’s training was 0.018 MJ ME / kg BW / day (SD = 0.005, CI = 0.001, *n* = 60 horses) representing a multiple of maintenance of 15.3%. This implies that the official guidance in the US and France may overstate expenditure for exercise by 111% and 15%, respectively (*P* < .01). Daily energy expenditure between countries and within disciplines was consistent, allowing for the creation of user-friendly tables which can be used in budgeting the energy component of diets.

**Key words:** energy balance, equine, equine obesity, exercise, maintenance, nutrition model.

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ADF, acid detergent fibre

BCS, body condition score

BPM, beats per minute

BW, bodyweight

CP, crude protein

DE, digestible energy

DM, dry matter

EE, energy expenditure

EWpa, Energiewaarde paard

HR, heart rate

MBW, metabolic bodyweight

Mcal, one million calories

ME, metabolisable energy

MEe, metabolisable energy expenditure for exercise

MEm, metabolisable energy expenditure for maintenance

MJ, megajoule

MOE, margin of error

NDF, neutral detergent fibre

RQ, respiratory quotient

TB, Thoroughbred

UFC, Unité Fourragère de Cheval

VO₂, volume of oxygen

**EQUATIONS USED IN THIS STUDY**

**Digestible energy** (DE) was calculated according to the methodology of the NRC (2007, p.4) where DE / Mcal / kg DM = 4.22-0.11 x (%ADF) + 0.0332 x (%CP) + 0.0012 x (%ADF²).

**Metabolisable energy** (ME) was calculated from DE by deducting estimated renal losses (per gram of protein, 0.008 MJ were deducted from DE) and methane energy losses (per gram of crude fibre, 0.002 MJ were deducted from DE) according to Kienzle and Zeiner (2010) and Hipp, et al, (2017).

**Converting DE to ME** for the purpose of comparing different national systems: the formula DE x 0.8318 = ME was used. This factor is the mean ME/DE ratio from the 60 diets in this study.

**Unité fourragèr de cheval** (UFC) was converted to ME using INRA's ME value of 1 kg of barley, 12.05 MJ, and converting MBW to BW on the basis of a 500 kg horse.

**Energiewaarde paard** (EWpa) is converted to ME using the CVB's ME value of 1 kg of oats, 11.4 MJ, and converting MBW to BW on the basis of a 500 kg horse.

**Metabolisable energy expenditure during exercise (MEm)** was calculated from Coenen’s (2010) formula (MEe in J / kg BW / min) = ((0.0566\*HR¹˙⁹⁹⁵⁵) – 68). 68 J ME was this study’s finding for the energy expenditure of standing still / minute).

**INTRODUCTION**

The energy requirements for the maintenance and training of performance horses have been assessed from feeding trials and indirect calorimetry trials. These include Winchester (1943), Wooden, et al. (1970), Hintz, et al. (1971), Stillons and Nelson (1972), Anderson, et al. (1983), Pagan and Hintz (1986), Vermorel, et al. (1990), Martin-Rosset and Vermorel (1991), Vermorel et al. (1997a), Vermorel et al. (1997b) and Kienzle, et al. (2010). More recently, authors have assessed the energy requirements for weight gain, including Cordero, et al. (2013), Ferjak, et al. (2017) and Zoeller, et al. (2019).

There are currently four major sources of guidance for determining the energy requirements of horses in Europe and North America, which rely, to an extent, on the trials cited above. The most widely used for guidance for the energy expenditure for maintenance (MEm) is that of National Research Council of the National Academies (NRC, 2007) and is based on digestible energy (DE). The German guidance (Kinzle, 2010) was updated and improved with the development of a metabolisable energy (ME) system incorporating predictive equations for renal and methane energy losses, based on metabolic body weight (MBW). France’s system (INRA, 2012) is based on metabolic chamber and field studies, and is the most comprehensively researched. It uses the Unité Fourragère de Cheval (UFC) energy unit. In 2016, the CVB (Central Bureau, Livestock Feeding, Netherlands) adopted a Net Energy (NE) system (Energiewaarde paard or EWpa) for horses which is similar to the French system and uses a standard value of oats as the energy unit (Block, 2016). With the exception of the NRC (2007), the systems described above do not make recommendations based on training disciplines (such as racing, endurance, or the Olympic disciplines), even though disciplines can differ significantly in terms of their metabolic demand and the breed of horses involved. The NRC, INRA and CVB recommendations for energy expenditure for exercise (MEe) are impractical for use by owners and trainers because it is difficult to map actual training to the systems. So far, none of the systems’ guidance for the energy requirements of exercise is based on discipline-specific heart rate (HR) data gathered in the field.

Although equine HR monitors have been in use for over twenty years, recent improvements in monitors and their software have increased accuracy and reliability for measuring HR, speed, pace, altitude and location of horses in field training, enabling this study. The formulas for the conversion of HR to energy expenditure (EE) in horses using indirect calorimetry are well established (Coenen, 2010 and Robergs and Burnett, 2003), with further validation in the present study. Recommendations for MEe based on treadmill studies, in a lab, without a rider cannot take into account all the inherent variables associated with exercising horses outdoors. These shortcomings can be overcome by using HR monitors in the field.

The aim of this study was to monitor the energy requirements of Swiss and English horses in training for common levels of dressage, show jumping and eventing (hereafter referred to as the Olympic disciplines), developing a user-friendly / owner-centric method for monitoring energy expenditure in order to achieve energy balance throughout a long competition season.

The objectives of the present study were:

1. estimate the energy intake of 60 horses across two countries, and

2. estimate MEm and MEe to deletion assess energy requirements, differentiating between disciplines and types of training, and

3. create new user-friendly tables to enable horse owners to estimate the maintenance and exercise requirements of their individual horses.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

***Experimental procedures involving animals***

The experimental procedures were approved by the Royal Agricultural University’s Animal Ethics Committee.

***Approach***

This study measured 60 horses for two week periods with the primary aim of establishing the energy requirements of maintenance and exercise, differentiating between disciplines and types of training. Fifteen of those horses were chosen for extended measurement periods ranging from 21 to 42 weeks with the primary aim of validating the findings related to the energy requirements of maintenance. Fifty-six of the horses were owned by their amateur riders. Thirty of the horses were kept at 3 yards in Switzerland and the other 30 were kept in 3 yards in England. All but one were professionally managed yards focussed on competing at various levels in the disciplines detailed above. A profile of the horses by discipline is set out in the table below:

**Table 1: Description of horses included in this study**

A summary of the breeds of the horses included in this study is set out in the table below:

**Table 2: Breeds of horses included in this study**

All horses were individually stabled in their home boxes, with a mean area of 16m², with 28 horses bedded on wood shavings or derivatives and the others bedded on wheat straw. Welfare assessments in accordance with the UK DEFRA Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses, Ponies, Donkeys and their Hybrids (DEFRA, 2018) were made on the first day the authors came into contact with a given horse, and then weekly during body condition and body weight (BW) recording. All horses were judged to be in appropriate health for their competitive demands.

***Management of the study***

The two-week monitoring took place between the months of July and mid-December in 2016 and 2017 and between January and August in 2019. Five to six horses were included in each separate sequential cohort so that a single person could manage the entire study. With the exception of four inactive horses used as controls, all horses were in active training, with 33 in competition during the study. Horses were recruited on the conditions that a.) they had been in active, constant training over the previous 2 months, b.) their training programmes, BW and diets had been stable for the past 30 days and c.) pasture did not constitute a material portion of their energy input.

In order to validate the maintenance requirement findings, fifteen of the horses were selected for extended monitoring beyond the two week periods. They were selected with the intention of achieving a balanced representation of the full sixty horse cohort in terms of country, discipline and breed and included the four controls. Continued inclusion in the study ranged from 21 – 42 weeks and was dependent on the sustained soundness of the horse and the length of time the owner maintained the horse in energy balance without its receiving a material level of energy from pasture.

***Horse measurements***

Body weight (using an Equiscales 3-part portable Equine Scale, Equiscales Ltd., Doncaster, UK), key dimensions (sternum height, heart girth, body length and front pelvis width) and Body Condition Score (BCS) (9 point scale of Henneke, et al.,1983) were recorded for each horse on the day it entered the study, on a weekly basis and on the day it exited the study.

***Measurement of energy intake***

Diets fed to each horse were the same individualised diets which had been fed for the 30 days previous to the study. Sentence deleted Manufactured feed was rationed using standard measures (Stubbs scoops, etc.) and weighed (using an Allweigh, UK, 10 kg hanging scale). In 2016 and 2017 hay or haylage was stuffed in haynets and weighed (using the Allweigh scales and deducting the weight of the haynets). In 2019 hay was measured out using a “smart forage wagon” invented by the author and constructed by Equiscales Ltd., Doncaster, UK, which records the weight of the hay removed from the wagon to the nearest 10g which facilitated accurate measurement with minimal effort. The accuracy of the weights of non-forage feed and hay fed in haynets was controlled by the authors at the start of the study and then every three days throughout the study on a random basis to ensure that the correct quantities were being fed and to record refusals. The level of refusals of non-forage feed were zero and the mean refusals of forage were deducted from total forage fed.

Thirty two of the 60 horses (53%) were bedded on wheat straw. Based on the amount of hay refused, discussions with owners and observation by the authors, straw consumption was estimated at zero, 1 or 2 kg / day. There was no significant difference between the measured energy consumption between the horses bedded on straw or wood shavings (*P* = 0.409).

Energy values were calculated in terms of ME, since DE systems overestimate the energy value of forage by about 15% (INRA, 2011). All forage (20 different batches) was analysed by the Irish Equine Centre (Naas, Republic of Ireland) which reported dry matter (DM), crude protein (CP), acid detergent fibre (ADF) neutral detergent fibre (NDF) content and ash. This data was used to calculate the DE content utilising the methodology of the NRC (2007, p.4) where DE / Mcal / kg DM = 4.22-0.11 x (%ADF) + 0.0332 x (%CP) + 0.0012 x (%ADF²). DE values were then converted to ME by estimating renal losses (per gram of protein, 0.008 MJ were deducted from DE) and methane energy losses (per gram of crude fibre, 0.002 MJ were deducted from DE) according to Kienzle and Zeiner (2010) and Hipp, et al, (2017).

The energy values for processed feed for 23 of the Swiss horses were calculated using the same methodology as the forage calculations. The other 37 horses had a greater variation in processed feed (59 different feeds in total), phrase deleted and consequently the energy values were sourced from the manufacturers’ published nutritional data. For four forage-based feeds, manufacturers disclosed ranges of energy values; in those cases the value used was the mid-point of the range. These were limited to < 10% of the diets of four horses. The remainder were reported as absolute values, not minimums. In virtually all cases energy data was provided on a DE basis, calculated by the manufacturers using formulae similar to that described above (NRC, 2008). These DE values were converted to ME using the formulas described above. The ME content of non-processed / non-forage feeds was derived from INRA’s (2011) tables of chemical and nutrient composition of feedstuffs (principally apples and carrots mainly fed as treats).

***Conventions used in both studies***

MEm in this study is Field Maintenance expressed in MJ ME. It is defined here as the maintenance requirement of the horse over a 24 hour period for all activities other than specific training activities. MEe in this study is the energy expenditure for exercise during specific training periods less a deduction for the EE of standing still (see below). MEm plus MEe equals the total energy expended by the horse. Deletion Time spent on horse walkers > 30 minutes was classified as a training activity, whilst shorter sessions were included in Field Maintenance. All references to Body Condition Score (BCS) use the 9 point scale of Henneke, et al. (1983)

***Energy Expenditure for Exercise (MEe)***

Estimated MEe, expressed in MJ ME, was based on data acquired during training using Polar equine heart rate monitors employing Polar H7 electrode units (Polar Electro Oy, Professsorintie 5, FI - 90440, Kempele, Finland), recording average HR, speed, pace, and GPS maps. These were fitted on the left side of the horse in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions with one paddle placed under the saddle and the other attached to the girth strap. These were connected via Bluetooth to the Polar watch on the rider’s wrist. L’Oreal Lisse Unlimited Serum was used as a lubricant under the paddles (leaves no residue). Recording started when riders left the stable and stopped when they returned.

A diary of all training activities including duration was maintained for each horse. Every type of training session in the diary was monitored for each horse (hacking, longeing, arena work, jumping, work on a gallop (track), cross-country, coached sessions, etc.). Most owners used a mix of three of these training methods (most commonly a combination of arena, longeing and hacking, or gallop if they had access to a track). The recorded sessions were used to estimate the total energy expenditure for each week the horse was included in the study. For the fifteen horses included in the extended study, a significant number of the training sessions were repetitive with immaterial differences in measured MEe, and consequently MEe could be deleted estimated for certain types of sessions using the detailed diary entries and the previously collected data from the same horse. In total, 607 training sessions were monitored.

According to Frape (2010) and Coenen (2008), a strong relationship exists between O₂ consumption and HR, and HR is more easily measured than O₂ consumption. A closer relationship exists with percent of maximum HR (Coenen, 2005), and the best estimates of individual energy expenditure are produced by individual oxygen consumption / heart rate curves. It was impractical to measure maximum HR or oxygen consumption in a field setting with warmblood horses that were never pushed to their maximum HR. Consequently HR was converted to energy expenditure by applying Coenen’s (2008) formula. The formula uses the assumption that the heat equivalent of O₂ at a respiratory quotient (RQ) of .84 is on average 20.1 J / ml VO₂. Using 569 paired data, Coenen (2008) defined a non-linear relationship between VO₂ and HR (r²: 0.911). The resultant equation is: MEe (J / kg BW / min) = 0.0566\*HR¹˙⁹⁹⁵⁵, which was used in this study to calculate MEe. The RQ of .84, which corresponds to a mixed diet of carbohydrate, protein and fat, is consistent with the diets in this study. The calculated energy expenditure reflects the ATP production for muscle energy. According to Coenen (2010), we can take the calculated values as ME because the conversion of this chemically - organised energy into kinetic energy is associated with high heat losses.

Deletion The anaerobic component of exercise was estimated whenever HR exceeded 170 bpm using the methodology of Coenen (2010) which estimates the degree of anaerobic energy metabolism on the basis of lactate accumulation in the blood. Modelling a lactate accumulation curve allows the computation of the portion of total energy expenditure which is anaerobic. The assumption was made that all horses in the study were of average fitness, and therefore utilizing a curve corresponding to a lactate accumulation of 5.8 mmol / minute when speed is 28.8 kph and HR is 180 bpm was appropriate.

Coenen’s formulas yield an estimate total EE during exercise. MEe required a deduction for maintenance during the exercise bout to avoid double counting, since energy expenditure of maintenance in this study is measured as the difference between total energy input less energy expended for exercise. Winchester (1943) found that EE for standing was less than EE for horses in a lying position and so EE for standing was deducted. This was derived from respiratory studies by Fortier, et al. (2015)*,* Coenen (2010), Minetti, et al. (1999), Eaton (1994). Winchester (1943) and INRA (2011). A standard rate of 68 joules ME / kg BW / minute (equivalent to 0.098 MJ ME / kg BW / 24 hours) was used. The result after the deduction for standing still, expressed in ME, is referred to below as “HR Derived MEe”.

This study introduces a metric, “Exercise ratio”, which is calculated as the daily energy expenditure for exercise divided by the standard energy expenditure for standing still for 24 hours. It allows for the comparison of training effort from week to week, between individual horses and between groups of horses and can also be used on a daily basis to guide training for a week.

***Comparison of MEe findings with other studies***

For all 56 horses in active training, MEe was computed using three methodologies: NRC’s (2007), INRA’s (2012) and the HR Derived MEe described above. The results were compared to explore the range of outcomes depending on the system used.

The NRC methodology (NRC, 2007) required an analysis of time allocation to gaits, minutes trained and average HR for a week’s training in order to ascribe a workload category of light, moderate, heavy or very heavy. Depending on the category, the following NRC equations were applied to arrive at MEe: for light work, DE (Mcal/d) = (0.0333 x BW) x .20, for moderate work, DE (Mcal/d) = (0.0333 x BW) x .40, for heavy work DE (Mcal/d) = (0.0333 x BW) x .60 and for very heavy work DE (Mcal/d) = (0.0363 x BW) x .90.

The INRA methodology (INRA, 2012) is based on daily training and required an analysis of the time allocation to gaits and an assessment of intensity for each training session, differentiating between “open-air work” and work done in an arena. Actual work done was mapped to INRA’s energy cost of one hour of work (INRA, 2012, p. 237), expressed in UFC (unité fourragèr de cheval), which was multiplied by an elapsed time factor and converted to ME using the French standard ME value of 1 kg of barley, 12.05 MJ. For example, a “short, light ride” in the open air for 45 minutes would require 1.5 UFC x 45/60 x 12.05 = 13.6 MJ ME for a 500 kg horse.

In addition to the NRC and INRA methodology, the Dutch CVB (Block, 2016) system was also compared. This is based on the findings of Pagan and Hintz (1986) and provides a formula for converting speed into net energy expenditure. The system requires the allocation of training time to speed bands which correspond to gaits. This was easily computed since Polar output includes elapsed time in customisable speed bands. Minutes spent in each speed band are multiplied by the appropriate EWpa factor. For example, the formula for ME expenditure at a trot for one minute (guideline speed 240m / min) is: MEe (J ME / min / kg BW) = 0.0392 Ewpa/1000 x 11,448 = 447 J, where the conversion factor from Ewpa to kJ ME is 11,448. From a practical perspective, this system is limited to training on a track or a gallop and consequently this methodology was applied to each of the 31 training sessions on a gallop and the resultant MEe was compared to this study’s HR Derived MEe for those sessions.

***Energy expenditure for field maintenance (MEM)***

Energy expenditure for field maintenancewas estimated by deducting the MEE from the ME value of total feed intake.

***Data analysis***

Sixty different diets were analysed over 457 horse weeks ( ∑ number of weeks each horse was included in the study), including 20 different batches of hay or haylage and 59 other feeds. Energy input was computed for 60 horses over the two week periods and 176 complete training sessions were monitored with HR monitors for the 56 active horses during these periods. The MEe for the various gaits (walk, trot, canter and gallop) was determined by identifying changes in speed to determine the gait and then aggregating the second-by-second MEe in each gait to compute means of MEe / minute / gait. For the 15 horses in the extended study, energy input and MEe were computed over 357 horse weeks and 432 complete training sessions were monitored with HR monitors. Inclusion of horses in the extended study was limited to periods during which they maintained energy balance, which was defined as those periods covered by a flat trend line on a graph of weight vs. MEm (r² < .001).

In order to compute the MEe for each horse, training session data from HR monitors was uploaded to Polar using the Polar Flow Synch Application (Polar Electro Oy, Professsorintie 5, FI - 90440, Kempele, Finland), and Excel spreadsheets (Microsoft Office Home and Business 2013) were downloaded from Polar Flow, which reported elapsed time, heart rate, speed, pace, cadence, altitude, distance and temperature for each second recorded. This data was then entered into an Excel-based data sheet producing 46 different analyses, including second-by-second and meter-by-meter aerobic and anaerobic energy consumption by gait. Means of MEe / kg BW / minute and per metre were sorted by discipline, training activity and gait.

Mean daily MEm was computed as the difference between energy intake and MEe for each horse. This was sorted by discipline, horse temperament, active / inactive training status, age and BCS to provide the means underlying this study’s conclusions for MEm. These were calculated on both a MBW and BW basis deletion and to facilitate comparison with the four official systems which use different bases.

***Statistical justification of sample sizes***

The statistical objective was for the margin of error to be acceptable in the context of equine diet formulation for healthy horses. A “margin of error” (MOE) was used to assess the reliability of the means, and was calculated as the radius of the confidence interval with α set at 0.05 and has been expressed as a percentage of the mean. A 5% MOE was considered acceptable for maintenance energy requirements, and a 20% MOE was chosen for exercise energy requirements (since MEe is generally limited to less than 20% of MEm). These choices dictated the sample sizes for the calculation of means.

Effect size was defined here as the mean difference between this study’s findings and the NRC (2007) guidance, and was estimated as > 15% based on a pilot study involving four horses. Student’s *t*-tests and ANOVA were used for comparative analysis, with α set at < 0.05. Sample size was dictated by setting the power (1- *ß*) at > 0.8. Power was calculated using the formulas of Cohen (1988) and is detailed in tables 6 and 10.

**RESULTS**

***Training regimes***

The results of the monitoring of the training sessions were sorted by the main discipline for which the horse was being trained and are presented in Table 3 below. The table excludes the four inactive horses and the two oldest horses which were trained for significantly shorter periods than the others. All horses worked to weekly training programmes with a high degree of repetition week after week, with a mix of hacking, arena work, longeing, work on a gallop or cross-country course if it was available and discipline specific work (cross country, jumping and dressage figures) with one or two days off. Therefore, the results in Table 3 are stated as weekly values, except for the last column. The last column is stated as the mean MEe / kg BW / day after deducting an estimate of EE for standing still and includes days off, making it the appropriate value to use as an estimate of the daily allowance for exercise in diet formulation.

**Table 3 - Weekly training regimes for 54 sporthorses in training for dressage, eventing, showjumping and general sporthorse training: reporting means of duration, average heart rate, exercise ratio, distance, energy expenditure, and allocation of gaits per week**

With the exception of “eventing” (small sample size), the margins of error are all below 10% for duration, mean HR, intensity, distance and mean MEe. The only significant variances between groups occurred in the categories “distance” and “allocation to gaits”. There were no significant differences for energy expenditure between groups or within groups. Deletion

***Energy expenditure for exercise (MEe)***

The results from the monitoring of the training sessions during the two-week study were sorted by training activity and are presented in Table 4 below. Deletion The sample comprises one training session for each type of work (activity) undertaken by each of the 56 horses in active training. Deletion Table 4 reports MEe after deducting an estimate of EE for standing still, and therefore represents the marginal energy cost of training. The mean intensity and energy expenditure are higher for the sessions in Table 4 than the training regimes in Table 3 because Table 3 captures weekly training regimes and therefore includes days off.

**Table 4 - Means of duration, exercise intensity, maximum speed, distance, mean heart rate, maximum heart rate, energy consumption and allocation of training time to gaits for 56 sporthorses in training**

With the exception of longeing, the margins of error for MEe expressed in J / kg BW / min. are all < 7%, underlining the potential for using this metric in calculating MEe for energy budgeting in diet formulation. Longeing was excluded from the analysis of differences between groups. It was by far the most intensive activity in terms of energy expenditure / minute of training, however it was the least intensive in terms of energy expenditure / training session, due to the shorter duration of longeing sessions.

MEe / minute was analysed down to the level of the distinct gaits (walk, trot, canter, gallop and “other”, which includes dressage figures and jumping activities not fitting neatly into the description of the classic gaits). This is summarised in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Marginal Energy expenditure per minute, by gait, for 56 horses engaged in equestrian sport training**

***This study’s results for MEe compared to the NRC, INRA and CVB recommendations***

The methodology of the NRC (2007), INRA (2012) and the CVB (Block, 2016) was used to re-compute the MEe for the 56 horses in active training during the short-term part of the study. These computations were compared to the HR Derived MEe in order to explore the range of outcomes depending on the system used. The results of this comparative analysis are set out in Table 6 below. The means of the individual differences between the official systems and the HR Derived MEe illustrate the wide range of outcomes which are solely a function of the choice of guidance system.

**Table 6: Comparison of energy expenditure of exercise computed using the methodology of four different systems**

***Nutrient intake***

The mean nutrient intake for each horse was sorted by the horse’s principal training discipline and is presented in Table 7 below which separates the data into the relative contributions of forages / chaffs and other feeds. Horses in training for specific disciplines consumed significantly less forage (*P* < 0.05) than the all-rounder and inactive horses. Mean energy expenditure for exercise in Table 7 is identical to that derived from the weekly training regimes (Table 3). Inactive horses were longed and exercised on a horse walker which accounts for their low MEe. Mean MEe as a percentage of maintenance was 15.3% (includes days off).

**Table 7: Metabolisable energy and dry matter intake by type of feed: in total, for exercise and for maintenance for 60 performance horses**

The mean nutrient intake for each horse was sorted by the country in which the horse trained and is presented in Table 8.

**Table 8: Metabolisable energy and dry matter intake by type of feed, in total and for maintenance, for 60 performance horses in the UK and Switzerland**

There was a significant difference (*P* < 0.001) between the mix of forage / chaff and other feed (principally concentrate) between the two countries. Nevertheless, DM intake / kg BW did not differ between the two countries (*P* = 0.707) and there was no difference between the ME provision for the two groups (*P* = 0.558). This can be explained by the higher ME value of the UK forage, which included hay, haylage and treated chaffs, whereas the only forage the Swiss horses were fed was hay.

***Energy expenditure for field maintenance***

The field maintenance results for the 15 horses in the extended study are presented in Table 9 below.

**Table 9: Individual field maintenance requirements for 15 horses while in a state of constant BW (energy balance)**

All horses were in continual energy balance during the periods recorded, which is defined here as those periods covered by a flat trend line on a graph of weight vs. MEm (r² < .001). Intraweek variation of MEm for each horse (reported in the SD and CV columns) was low with a mean CV of 7.8%, and is principally a function of changes in training demands. Despite the considerable variation in horse age and activity, the coefficient of variation of MEm / kg BW / day between horses was low. There was no difference between the mean MEm / kg BW / day of the inactive (control) horses and the active horses (*P* = 0.915). No seasonal variation (*P* *>* 0.05) in MEm was noted. There was no correlation between age and MEm (correlation = -0.031, *n* = 60). There was no difference between the horses in the two-week study and the extended study (*P* = 0.690). Referring to Table 7 above, there were no significant differences in MEm between disciplines (*P* = 0.26). The foregoing provides confidence that the energy expenditure for maintenance value of 0.1182 MJ ME / kg BW / day can be used for all horses involved in the Olympic disciplines on a mixed diet comprising between 60% and 85% forage, regardless of discipline, age, season or active / inactive status.

***This study’s findings for Energy Expenditure for Maintenance (MEm) compared to the official recommendations***

The methodologies of the NRC (2007), Kienzle, et al. (2010) (German), INRA (2012) and the CVB (Block, 2016) were used to re-compute the MEm for all 60 horses during the short-term part of the study. These values were compared to the findings of this study in order to explore the range of outcomes depending on the system used. The results of this comparative analysis are set out in Table 10 below.

**Table 10: Comparison of maintenance recommendations**

Maintenance accounted for 86.7% (SD = 3.2%, CI = .009%, *n* = 56) of the energy used by the horses in active training in this study. There were no significant differences between the results using the NRC recommendations and the HR Derived MEm in this study (*P* = 0.087). However, using the German recommendations for moderately trained horses would have resulted in a 10.4% understatement of MEm (*P* < 0.00001), using the INRA recommendations would have resulted in an 8.9% understatement (*P* < 0.00001) and using the CVB recommendations would have resulted in a 20.9% understatement (*P* < 0.00001). In terms of total EE, using the NRC system to measure both MEm and MEe for the 60 horses in the study results in a mean 13.2% (SD = 13.9%, CI = 3.8%, *n* = 60, *P* < 0.0001) overstatement of total EE (since it significantly overstates MEe). Using the INRA system results in a mean 5.2% (SD = 11.7%, CI = 3.2%, *n* = 60, *P* < 0.0001) understatement (since it significantly understates MEm).

**DISCUSSION**

***Methodology***

Previously published studies examining energy expenditure for maintenance are predominantly based on feeding trials with inactive horses or horses kept in metabolic chambers. These include Winchester (1943), Wooden, et al. (1970), Stillons and Nelson (1972), Pagan and Hintz (1986), Vermorel, et al. (1990), Martin-Rosset and Vermorel (1991), Vermorel et al. (1997a) and Vermorel et al. (1997b). Although energy balance studies using metabolic chambers or stalls to measure heat production via indirect calorimetry produce highly accurate results, by their nature they are limited to 4-5 days duration, cannot be run on days when the horse is exercising, do not take place in a field setting, and place the horse in an unnatural state of forced inactivity. Furthermore, the cost of the methodology precludes large sample sizes.

The methodology used here allows the measurement of actual ‘real-life’ training and maintenance over extended periods with large sample sizes and therefore takes into account the normal every-day stresses and strains that can influence energy expenditure which are impossible to reproduce either in a metabolic chamber (maintenance) or on a treadmill (exercise). This, in turn, provides a better understanding of variation and produces results with a lower margin of error and high statistical power. It also facilitated the long-term monitoring of training regimes across several different disciplines and demonstrated that, despite variations in season, discipline and country, training and maintenance demands remained remarkably similar from day to day. Deletion

The Equine HR monitors and their related software used here have improved over the past 10 years to the point where they are highly accurate: Ille, *et al.* (2014) compared the HR obtained from a Polar HR monitor to a simultaneously recorded electrocardiogram signal for 14 Haflinger mares and found that the data were highly correlated irrespective of the recording system and recording time (r> 0.99, *P* < 0.001).

***Training Regimes***

The key metrics of weekly training regimes for four different disciplines (Table 3) illustrated a low level of variation. deletion Aside from four dressage horses, all of the horses in this study were trained by their amateur owners, who were either students or in full-time unrelated work and therefore faced time constraints on training sessions. There was only so much time devoted to daily training before the rider, the horse or both became fatigued or ran out of time (mean training time for all horses was 51 minutes, (SD = 16.6, CI = 2.48, *n* = 175)). As a consequence of this low level of variation, it is possible to create generalised formulas for the energy expenditure of exercise with low margins of error.

***Energy expenditure for exercise***

In terms of daily training activities (Table 4), although maximum speed and distance were significantly different between activities, the other key metrics were not, except for longeing. Longeing tended to be the chosen activity on those days when the trainer had less personal time for training. Given that it is by far the most intense activity in terms of energy expenditure / minute, this represents the optimal use of limited time.

The most common gait was walking (62% mean allocation). However excluding hacking deletion it falls to 54%, with a mean of 27 minutes walking out of 51 minutes mean total session duration, most of which was walking during recovery. deletion Dunn et al. (1991) note that for one hour after moderate training, oxygen consumption remains at 10% above pre-session consumption. According to the NRC (2007), most studies have not accounted for the energy costs of an elevated, post-exercise metabolic rate in their calculations of energy use. It suggests that the maintenance requirement may need to be increased by 10% for some horses to account for this. Deletion In this study, measurement was from the moment the rider left the stables until the moment she returned and therefore warm down is included in the MEe findings. This study’s methodology of computing maintenance as the difference between total intake and MEe would fully account for elevated post-exercise metabolic rates.

Mean session HR was not significantly different between activities. It was significantly less than the NRC’s (2007) HR’s for light exercise and the light exercise sessions devised by Zoller, et al. (2019) intended to replicate the NRC’ “light” example. Mean HR is a poor metric for evaluating the intensity of training because it is correlated with the time spent in walk. Deletion Furthermore, the relationship between HR and energy expenditure is exponential and HR does not take into account anaerobic energy expenditure. Calculated mean anaerobic energy expenditure as a percentage of total expenditure for the horses training on a gallop in this study was 3.4% (SD = 2.3%, CI = 0.8%, *n* = 32), and 2.7% (SD 0 1.8%, CI = 0.6%, *n* = 38) for those in a flatwork session. An deleted alternative method of evaluating the training effort between sessions is the “exercise ratio” metric developed here (energy expenditure for exercise divided by the standard energy expenditure of standing still for 24 hours). It allows for the comparison of training effort from session to session, week to week, between individual horses and between groups of horses and can also be used on a daily basis to guide aerobic training.

Since the calculated energy expenditure had low margins of error, riders can use the tables from this study to estimate the energy expenditure of training. Riders who train their horses approximately 5 hours / week with a gait allocation broadly similar to Table 3 (or a mean HR close to 90 bpm), can add 0.0185 MJ (18.5 joules) ME / kg BW / day (9.25 MJ ME / day for a 500 kg horse) to the maintenance requirement to maintain energy balance with a small margin of error (3.7%). Riders can obtain a reasonably accurate estimate of the energy expenditure of a given training session by multiplying the minutes trained by the energy expenditure / minute in the last column of Table 4 times the BW of their horse. Alternatively, riders can record the time spent in each gait during a given training activity, and using Table 5, multiply the energy expenditure by gait by the number of minutes in each gait. Adding the products together will yield an approximation of MEe. This is very similar to the methodology recommended by Coenen (2010) for measuring the energy expenditure of a given training session.

***This study’s results for the MEe compared to the NRC, INRA and CVB recommendations and other studies***

Applying the best fit of the 56 exercise programmes to the NRC (2007) system, 74% of the programmes fell into the NRC’s “medium” category which would call for supplemental energy equal to 40% of maintenance. The NRC recommendations exceeded the HR Derived MEe 100% of the time, *ie,* for all horses in the sample, implying that following the NRC recommendations would result in feeding over twice the energy required for exercise.

Even if all 56 exercise programmes were classified in the NRC’s “light” category (which would call for supplemental energy of 20% of maintenance), the NRC recommendations would exceed the HR Derived MEe for 41 of the 56 horses. The mean weekly MEe for horses in active training in this study was only 15.3% of maintenance (CI = .012%, SD = 4.6%, *n* = 55).

Applying the best fit of the 56 exercise programmes to INRA’s (2012) system, INRA’s recommendations exceeded the HR Derived MEe for 37 of the 56 horses in the study. The INRA results were far closer to this study’s results than the NRC values. However, the standard deviation is high: the INRA recommendations differed from the HR Derived MEe by a magnitude of >25% for 42% of the horses.

Comparing this study’s mean energy expenditure for each gait (Table 5) to the CVB system (Block, 2016), the CVB system under-estimates the EE of walk (-52%) and trot (-39%) and over-estimates the EE of canter (+11%) and gallop (+7%). On the whole it underestimated MEe compared to the HR Derived MEe.

Anderson et al.’s (1983) results for the MEe of four horses exercising at mean HR’s of 135 bpm was significantly higher than the results found here, however they involved 20 minute sessions on inclined treadmills without a break, a level of training found infrequently in the present study. Hintz, et al.’s (1971) findings for equitation horses were 20% higher than the findings of this study, however the mean duration of their sessions was 84 minutes versus a mean of 51 in the present study and therefore walking accounted for proportionally less EE in their study. INRA’s (2012) current guidance for MEe for each gait is based on Meixner, et al. (1981). Their EE for walk, trot and gallop are 12%, 23% and 86% higher than the present study. This can be partially explained by their speeds being faster and their horses carrying a load of 100kg (rider + tack + apparatus), compared to a mean load of 82kg for the present study. It is also possible that these horses were competing at a higher level than the horses in the present study.

***Nutrient Intake***

Total DM intake / kg BW was almost identical across all groups of horses, however total ME intake was not. Inactive horses had the lowest ME intake / kg BW, followed by the all-rounder horses. Horses in training for specific disciplines (dressage, jumping and eventing) had the highest ME intakes. Total ME intake is correlated with the exercise ratio. Horses in training for specific disciplines consumed significantly less forage than the all-rounder horses and inactive horses. Trainers of horses in specific disciplines delivered the greater energy requirement by feeding more concentrate, not more forage, even though mean forage consumption was 14 gr / kg BW / day (SD = 4, CI = 1.4, n = 40), well below the upper limit of maximum voluntary hay intake of 20 gr / kg BW established by Dulphy, et al. (1997). Although there were no significant differences in DM or ME intake for maintenance between the Swiss and the UK horses, the UK horses were fed a significantly higher portion of forage and chaff, which was higher in energy content than the Swiss forage. This can be explained by the fact that the provision of forage in Switzerland was exclusively hay, whilst horses in the UK were fed a mix of chaff, haylage and hay.

Most of the required energy for horses in these disciplines can be met from forage, with the UK horses obtaining 83.9% (SD = 12.3%, CI = 4.9%, *n* = 24) of their total energy requirement from forage, with 38% of those horses deriving > 90% of their energy from forage. The only supplements required for any of the horses in both studies were copper, selenium, zinc and sodium. The UK horses met all of their maintenance requirements (except the minerals listed above) on a mean diet of 15 grams DM of forage / kg BW / day (SD = 3.2, CI =1.3, *n* = 24) (17 grams “as fed”) and 2 grams of average concentrate feed / kg BW / day (SD = 1.0, CI = 0.5, *n* = 24). Jansson, et al. (2012) note that by selecting forage with proper energy and crude protein content, forage-only diets may provide 100% of the protein and energy requirements of athletic horses.

Vermorel, et al. (1990) and Vermorel, et al. (1997a) found that all-forage diets required 14.4% and 16.6%, respectively, more ME than a 60% hay / 40% concentrate diet due to the different efficiencies of ME utilisation. Likewise, Karlsson, et al. (2000) found that the expected DE of a diet composed of 40% hay and 60% oats should have been 63% of GE, compared with the value of 58% measured, corresponding to a difference of 8% in DE. They suggested that predominantly cereal based diets may result in a depressed pre-caecal starch breakdown (citing Kienzle, 1994) and hence transfer of too much starch into the hindgut, lowering the microbial fermentation of the fibre components. However, they noted a small increase in digestibility of fibre in a 80% hay / 20% oats diet compared to 100% hay, suggesting that this may be explained by a stimulation of the hindgut microbial activity and fibre digestion by a small amount of concentrate. The mean diet in this study was 69% forage and 31% other feeds (MOE of 4.9%), many of which included pelletised forage. Given the low level of variation in the mix of forage / concentrate in the diets of performance horses, at this level it can be assumed that the digestibility of the rations is equivalent to the weighted sum of the nutrients supplied (Martin – Rosset, et al., 1984). The findings here would not be valid for 100% forage diets, nor would they be valid for diets where > 35% of the diet is derived from grain.

***Field maintenance requirements***

This study’s findings are consistent with the NRC (2007) recommendations for horses with average or elevated voluntary activity levels. The German (Kienzle, et al., 2010), French (INRA, 2012) and Dutch (Block, 2016) recommendations are all lower than this study. The confinement studies were all lower, as could be expected: Wooden, et al. (1970) were 13% lower, Stillions and Nelson (1972) were 4.6% lower, Vermorel, et al. (1990) were 0.6% lower for a mixed diet, Martin-Rosset and Vermorel (1991) were 2.5% lower for horses in summer and 5.6% lower overall, Martin-Rosset, et al. (1994) were 2.1% lower, Vermorel, et al. (1997a) were 2.9% lower for a diet comparable to the mean of this study, and Vermorel (1997b) were within 0.9% for a comparable diet. For unconfined horses, Anderson et al. (1977) were 2% higher and applying the equation of Pagan and Hintz (1986a) to the 566kg mean weight of the horses in this study, the results were exactly equal.

MEm in the present study included all normal activity over an extended period but also included transport, turn-out, ground training, grooming, shoeing, and veterinary / osteopathic treatments (time spent on horse walkers > 30 minutes was classified as a training activity, whilst shorter sessions were not). This explains why some of the official recommendations were lower than the findings of this study. Adding this study’s formulas for Field Maintenance and MEe together provides owners with complete guidance for their horse’s energy requirements.

A notable feature of this study’s findings is the low CV for maintenance requirements when expressed as MJ ME / kg BW / day or MJ ME / kg MBW / day. The results indicate that the requirements for maintenance and exercise of sport horses in training can be predicted with a relatively high level of precision if they are tailored to discipline and type of training, respectively. This is illustrated by the case of the six Thoroughbreds included in this study (10% of the sample). According to INRA (2012), the CVB (Block, 2016) and Coenen et al. (2011), Thoroughbreds deletion require higher maintenance energy / kg BW than warmbloods, however the Thoroughbred requirement in this study was not significantly higher. This may be explained by the fact that they were involved in similar training regimes and their mean BCS in this study was 5.8 (CI = 0.21, SD = 0.74, *n* = 6), compared to a mean of 5.9 for the other horses (CI = 0.26, SD = 0.91*, n* = 60), whereas the mean BCS for Thoroughbreds in racing training is 4.0 to 5.0 (Pagan et al., 2009). This supports Blaxter’s (1989), Kearns et al’s. (2002) and Coenen et al’s (2011) assertions that the energy requirement for maintenance is mainly linked to lean metabolic body mass. Precision may be enhanced when recommendations are tailored to a given discipline, not breed, if the BCS within the discipline is relatively homogenous.

Six of the horses in this study were characterised as having a nervous, high voluntary activity level. Members of this group were noticeably active in their boxes and during turn-out and exhibited switching behaviour, as described by McBride, et al. (2017), which was more frequent than the other horses. The Field Maintenance requirement of 0.1400 MJ ME / kg BW / day (CI = .014, SD = 0.74, *n* = 6) of these horses was 18.6% higher than the other horses. Deletion More work needs to be done in this area, but it appears that, consistent with the NRC’s (2007) recommendations, horses with a nervous disposition evidenced by high-level switching behaviour and /or relatively higher nocturnal variation in HR require a higher level of maintenance energy. The NRC (2007) recommends feeding 9% more for nervous horses. Based on the present study, an additional 15% of ME may be justified for nervous horses. Stereotypic behaviour such as cribbing, weaving or box kicking may also increase the maintenance requirement. Leuscher et al. (1998) found that approximately 12% of horses exhibited some type of stereotypical behaviour.

Blaxter (1989) and Kearns et al. (2002) conclude that oxygen consumption is more closely related to lean body mass than BW. There were 4 horses in this study with a BCS score > 7.5. Their field maintenance requirement was 24% lower than the other horses at 0.0912 MJ ME / kg BW / day (CI =.0108, SD = 0.0135, *n* = 4). Data from this study and Dougdale et al.’s (2012) study supports the suggestions of Bines et al. (1969) and the NRC (2007) that obesity constrains gut capacity and decreases metabolic energy requirements. Although the overweight animals in this study were horses, not ponies, and the sample size of four is small, the results are consistent with Coenen et al. (2011) and the other work cited above and would suggest that overweight horses require less energy / kg BW, with MEm limited to 0.0900 MJ ME / kg BW / day. deletion

Martin-Rosset and Vermorel (1991) found that MEm was lower for horses approximately eleven years old than for horses approximately four years old. This study found no correlation between age and MEm. Deletion They also found that horses require 8.2% more ME in the summer than in winter. The present study took place year-round, and the mean MEm here is within 0.3% of the mean in their study. There would be some merit in feeding 4% less ME in the winter and 4% more in the summer. Deletion

Each of the official systems calls for an upward adjustment from base maintenance for horses in “a normal level of activity” or “active training”. Even with this adjustment, the German, French and Dutch systems understate the energy requirement of maintenance when compared to this study, which found no difference in maintenance requirements between the active and inactive horses. Kearns, et al. (2002) found that the fat content of a fully trained sports horse was 5% compared to 20% for an untrained one. It would be expected that the active horses would have a higher MEm than inactive ones if the energy requirement for maintenance is mainly linked to lean metabolic body mass (Coenen et al., 2011). However, the mean BCS score for the inactive horses in this study was 6.2 (CI = .07, SD = 0.43, *n* = 4), almost identical to other 56 horses, which may explain the lack of a difference between the active and inactive horses.

**CONCLUSION**

The mean field maintenance expenditure for performance horses with a normal temperament was found to be 0.118 MJ of metabolisable energy (ME) / kg of bodyweight (BW) / day (SD = 0.008) with a low level of variation between horses. This is greater than the official guidance found in the US, France, Germany and Holland, even when the guidance is adjusted for turn-out and activity status. Heart rate monitoring of training revealed a mean estimated energy expenditure / ridden session of 0.023 MJ ME (SD = 0.001, CI = 0.001, *n* = 175 training sessions). The mean daily energy expenditure based on a full week’s training was 0.018 MJ ME / kg BW / day (SD = 0.005, CI = 0.001, *n* = 60 horses) representing a multiple of maintenance of 15.3%. There were no significant differences for energy expenditure between groups of horses being trained for different disciplines. Despite the large size of this study, few of the horses were trained as intensively as the examples in the guidance. Most of the required energy for horses training in dressage, show jumping and moderate eventing can be met from forage, with the UK horses obtaining 83.9% (SD = 12.3%, CI = 4.9%, *n* = 24) of their total energy requirement from forage, and 38% of those horses deriving > 90% of their energy from forage. Feeding an additional 15% over maintenance energy for horses in training and maintaining a high forage component of c. 85% is likely to deliver the required performance while maintaining horses in energy balance.

**DISCLOSURES**

In order to ensure absolute objectivity, this study was entirely self-funded by the authors.

There are no conflicts of interest.

**AUTHORSHIP**

This study was a joint effort by the two authors, Prof. Meriel Moore – Colyer and Mark Ebert. The original research question and concept was developed by Mr. Ebert, the study was designed jointly, Mr. Ebert analysed the data and the article was jointly written.

**End**

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**Table 1: Description of horses included in this study**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Sex | | | Mean Age | Age Range | Mean BW | BW Range | Mean BCS | BCS Range | Competitive level | | | |  |
| Discipline | *n=* | S | G | M | *Years* | *Years* | *kg* | *kg* | *(1-9)* | *(1-9)* | *Int.* | *Nat.* | *Reg.* | *None* |  |
| Dressage | 10 |  | 9 | 1 | 10.8 | 4-16 | 637 | 582-737 | 6.1 | 5.0-7.0 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 0 |  |
| Eventing | 5 |  | 4 | 1 | 7.6 | 4-12 | 540 | 483-598 | 5.4 | 5.0-6.0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 |  |
| Show jumping | 15 |  | 7 | 8 | 11.1 | 5-18 | 551 | 477-656 | 5.6 | 4.0-7.0 | 0 | 4 | 11 | 0 |  |
| All rounders | 26 | 1 | 18 | 7 | 11.9 | 5-22 | 566 | 378-692 | 6.1 | 4.0-7.5 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 23 |  |
| Inactive | 4 |  | 4 |  | 16.0 | 10-20 | 574 | 504-638 | 6.0 | 5.0-6.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |  |
| **Total** | **60** | **1** | **42** | **17** | **11.4** | **4-22** | **573** | **378-737** | **5.9** | **4.0-7.5** | **6** | **6** | **21** | **27** |  |
| BCS = Body Condition Score utilising the methodology of Henneke, et al. (1983), BW = live bodyweight, S = stallion, M = mare, G = gelding | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Competitive levels: Int. = international, Nat. = national, Reg. = regional | | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| "General purpose" refers to horses involved in dressage, jumping and trail riding | | | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Table 2: Breeds of horses included in this study**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Irish Sporting Horse (ISH) | 10 |  |
| German warmblood | 9 |  |
| Selle Francais | 9 |  |
| Dutch Warmblood | 6 |  |
| Swiss Warmblood | 4 |  |
| Thoroughbred | 4 |  |
| Welsh | 3 |  |
| KWPN | 2 |  |
| Connemara x Thoroughbred | 2 |  |
| Connemara | 1 |  |
| Cleveland Bay x Thoroughbred | 1 |  |
| Danish Warmblood | 1 |  |
| Trakehner x Throughbred | 1 |  |
| Fresian | 1 |  |
| ISH x Trakehner | 1 |  |
| Lusitanian | 1 |  |
| Oldenberg x TB | 1 |  |
| Registered Irish Draft (RID) | 1 |  |
| Trakehner | 1 |  |
| Welsh x Lusitanian | 1 |  |
|  | **60** |  |

**Table 3 - Weekly training regimes for 54 sporthorses in training for dressage, eventing, showjumping and general sporthorse training: reporting means of duration, average heart rate, training ratio, distance, energy expenditure, and allocation of gaits per week**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | ***n =*** | **Duration** | **Mean HR** | **Exercise** | **Distance** | **Time allocation to gaits (% of session)** | | | | **Mean MEe** |
| *Training discipline* |  | *(min./week)* | *bpm* | **Ratio** | *km / week* | *Walk* | *Trot* | *Canter* | *Other* | *MJ ME kg BW-1 day-1* |
| **Dressage** | **10** | **262** | **96** | **19.5%** | **24** | **45%** | **12%** | **3%** | **41%** | **0.0180** |
| SD |  | 39.5 | 7.8 | 4.5% | 4.3 | 13% | 11% | 4% | 24% | 0.0038 |
| MOE |  | 5.4% | 2.9% | 8.3% | 6.4% | 10.4% | 34.3% | 41.0% | 21.1% | 7.6% |
| **Eventing** | **5** | **284** | **93** | **21.2%** | **31** | **62%** | **21%** | **8%** | **10%** | **0.0199** |
| SD |  | 35 | 9 | 7.6% | 7 | 11% | 7% | 3% | 8% | 0.0059 |
| MOE |  | 7.7% | 5.9% | 22.2% | 14.4% | 11.3% | 21.0% | 27.6% | 51.4% | 18.6% |
| **Jumping** | **15** | **331** | **92** | **23.3%** | **37** | **63%** | **19%** | **12%** | **6%** | **0.0208** |
| SD |  | 79.1 | 7.2 | 6.7% | 11.3 | 7% | 5% | 7% | 6% | 0.0063 |
| MOE |  | 6.4% | 2.1% | 7.7% | 8.0% | 3.2% | 6.5% | 15.3% | 26.7% | 8.1% |
| **All rounders** | **24** | **291** | **90** | **19.6%** | **33** | **63%** | **20%** | **12%** | **5%** | **0.0177** |
| SD |  | 71.1 | 11.8 | 4.8% | 6.6 | 15% | 9% | 7% | 9% | 0.0037 |
| MOE |  | 5.2% | 2.8% | 5.2% | 4.3% | 5.0% | 9.2% | 11.7% | 36.2% | 4.5% |
| **All horses** | **54** | **294** | **91** | **20.5%** | **32** | **59%** | **18%** | **9%** | **13%** | **0.0185** |
| SD |  | 70.6 | 9.9 | 6.0% | 9.6 | 14% | 9% | 6% | 19% | 0.0051 |
| MOE |  | 3.2% | 1.4% | 3.9% | 4.0% | 3.2% | 6.6% | 9.0% | 18.5% | 3.7% |
| ***P* value** |  | *P* = 0.09 | *P* = 0.40 | *P* = 0.21 | *P* = <. 0.01 | *P* < 0.05 | *P* < 0.05 | *P* < 0.05 | *P* < 0.05 | *P* = 0.20 |
| *n* = number of sessions, HR = heart rate in beats / minute, ME = metabolisable energy, MEe = energy expenditure for exercise, MOE = margin of error, BW = bodyweight | | | | | | | | | | |
| Exercise ratio = daily energy expenditure of exercise / the standard energy expenditure for standing still for 24 hours | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |
| "Other" includes galloping, complex dressage figures, and jumping which do not fall neatly into the walk, trot and canter gaits. | | | | | | | |  |  |  |
| Table excludes 2 low activity horses and 4 inactive horses | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *P* values, with alpha set at 0.05, denote the significance of variation between the activities. | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |

**Table 4 - Means of duration, exercise ratio, maximum speed, distance, mean heart rate, maximum heart rate, energy consumption and allocation of training time to gaits for 56 sporthorses in training**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Duration | Exercise  Ratio | Max Speed | Distance | Time allocation to gaits (% of session) | | | | Mean HR | Max HR | ME Expenditure | |
| Training activity | *n=* | *min* | *%* | *km / hr* | *km* | *Walk* | *Trot* | *Canter* | *Other* | *bpm* | *bpm* | *MJ /kg BW* | *J/kg BW/min* |
| **Flatwork, mean** | **46** | **51.7** | **23.1%** | **21.9** | **5.6** | **57%** | **29%** | **12%** | **2%** | **90** | **168** | **0.0216** | **440** |
| SD |  | 19.0 | 9.3% | 7.4 | 2.3 | 10% | 10% | 9% | 4% | 13 | 29 | 0.0087 | 167 |
| MOE |  | 5.5% | 6.0% | 5.0% | 6.1% | 3% | 5% | 11% | 38% | 2.1% | 2.6% | 6.0% | 5.6% |
| **On the Gallop** | **36** | **49.0** | **25.9%** | **26.1** | **6.3** | **59%** | **26%** | **11%** | **4%** | **97** | **173** | **0.0241** | **516** |
| SD |  | 12.5 | 7.6% | 9.4 | 1.3 | 15% | 10% | 7% | 9% | 14 | 28 | 0.0070 | 181 |
| MOE |  | 4.3% | 5.0% | 6.1% | 3.6% | 4% | 7% | 10% | 40% | 2.4% | 2.7% | 4.9% | 5.9% |
| **Jumping** | **22** | **53.7** | **25.5%** | **25.2** | **5.55** | **52%** | **14%** | **8%** | **26%** | **90** | **171** | **0.0236** | **442** |
| SD |  | 22.8 | 14.4% | 4.42 | 3.00 | 15% | 11% | 12% | 20% | 10 | 24 | 0.0133 | 109 |
| MOE |  | 9.4% | 12.5% | 3.9% | 12.0% | 6% | 18% | 32% | 17% | 2.4% | 3.2% | 12.5% | 5.5% |
| **Hacking** | **42** | **53.4** | **24.4%** | **23.6** | **5.6** | **83%** | **11%** | **5%** | **0%** | **90** | **170** | **0.0226** | **436** |
| SD |  | 14.2 | 11.1% | 11.6 | 1.8 | 13% | 12% | 5% | 1% | 16 | 37 | 0.0102 | 190 |
| MOE |  | 4.1% | 7.1% | 7.6% | 5.0% | 2% | 17% | 15% | 53% | 2.7% | 3.4% | 7.0% | 6.8% |
| **Dressage** | **24** | **46.5** | **22.8%** | **15.5** | **4.2** | **47%** | **21%** | **3%** | **28%** | **94** | **168** | **0.0214** | **457** |
| SD |  | 11.7 | 9.6% | 2.4 | 1.0 | 14% | 21% | 6% | 29% | 11 | 30 | 0.0090 | 129 |
| MOE |  | 5.3% | 8.9% | 3.3% | 5.2% | 6% | 21% | 42% | 22% | 2.5% | 3.8% | 8.8% | 6.0% |
| **Longeing** | **18** | **31.1** | **19.1%** | **12.5** | **1.5** |  |  |  |  | **98** | **180** | **0.0181** | **609** |
| SD |  | 7.7 | 7.3% | 3.7 | 0.5 |  |  |  |  | 29 | 30 | 0.0067 | 251 |
| MOE |  | 6.1% | 9.5% | 7.3% | 8.8% |  |  |  |  | 7.5% | 4.1% | 9.3% | 10.3% |
| **All ridden activ.** | **175** | **50.8** | **24.0%** | **22.5** | **5.5** | **63%** | **20%** | **8%** | **9%** | **92** | **170** | **0.0223** | **456** |
| SD |  | 16.6 | 10.4% | 9.09 | 2.06 | 19% | 15% | 9% | 18% | 14 | 31 | 0.0096 | 170 |
| MOE |  | 2.4% | 3.2% | 3.0% | 2.8% | 2.2% | 5.4% | 7.6% | 15.5% | 1.1% | 1.4% | 3.2% | 2.8% |
| ***P* value** |  | **0.531** | **0.638** | **0.0001** | **0.004** | **< 0.001** | **< 0.001** | **< 0.001** | **< 0.001** | **0.079** | **0.984** | **0.686** | **0.189** |
| Exercise ratio = energy expenditure of exercise / the standard energy expenditure for standing still for 24 hours.  *n* = number of sessions, HR = heart rate in beats / minute, ME = metabolisable energy, BW = bodyweight, MOE = margin of error | | | | | | | | | | | | |  |
| Time allocation to gaits "other" includes galloping, jumping and complex dressage sequences. | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Energy Expenditure is after the deduction of the energy required for standing still. | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *P* values, with alpha set at 0.05, denote the significance of variation between the activities (longeing was excluded from this variation analysis). | | | | | | | | | | |  |  |  |
| Allocation to gaits for longeing was not possible due to the inability of GPS to measure accurately the speed and distance of tight patterns.  Values assume an adult female rider of average weight and intermediate to advanced competence. | | | | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |

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| --- |
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**Table 5: Marginal energy expenditure per minute, by gait, for 56 horses engaged in equestrian sport training**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Walk | |  | Trot | |  | Canter | |  | Gallop | |  | Other | |  |  |
|  | *EE/min* | *MOE* |  | *EE/min* | *MOE* |  | *EE/min* | *MOE* |  | *EE/min* | *MOE* |  | *EE/min* | *MOE* |  | *n*= |
| Flatwork | 257 | 9.1% |  | 601 | 6.0% |  | 767 | 5.5% |  | 1089 | 4.8% |  |  |  |  | 40 |
| On the Gallop | 295 | 7.1% |  | 615 | 6.5% |  | 951 | 4.3% |  | 1128 | 5.7% |  |  |  |  | 31 |
| Jumping | 245 | 5.9% |  | 469 | 3.1% |  | 689 | 3.0% |  |  |  |  | 796 | 4.1% |  | 20 |
| Hacking | 322 | 6.4% |  | 808 | 6.8% |  | 952 | 5.2% |  | 861 | 4.2% |  |  |  |  | 37 |
| Dressage | 322 | 9.2% |  | 615 | 5.3% |  | 589 | 4.0% |  |  |  |  | 570 | 3.8% |  | 22 |
| Longeing | 207 | 11.4% |  | 351 | 10.0% |  | 524 | 5.7% |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 20 |
| Walker (calm) | 226 | 8.4% |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 6 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **176** |
| EE = Energy expenditure in joules of metbolisable energy minute-1 kg of bodyweight-1 after deduction of energy required for standing still  MOE = margin of error | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| "Other" includes jumping circuits or mixed dressage figures. | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Values assume an adult female rider of average weight and intermediate to advanced competence | | | | | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Table 6: Comparison of energy expenditure of exercise computed using the methodology of four different systems**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | System used to calculate energy expenditure of exercise (MEe) | | | |  |
|  | **NRC** (2007) | **INRA** (2011) | **CVB** (Block, 2016) | **HR Derived MEe** |  |
| **Mean daily MEe (MJ ME / day)** | **22.5** | **12.4** | **9.00** | **10.8** |  |
| SD | 6.3 | 4.07 | 3.98 | 2.76 |  |
| CI | 1.7 | 1.13 | 1.35 | 0.76 |  |
| MOE | 3.9% | 4.6% | 5.1% | 3.5% |  |
| **Mean of individual differences between** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **official system and HR Derived MEe** | **111.0%** | **15.4%** | **-29.3%** |  |  |
| SD of the differences | 51.3% | 31.5% | 14.4% |  |  |
| CI | 14.2% | 8.73% | 5.2% |  |  |
| MOE | 6.4% | 28.3% | 8.8% |  |  |
| *P*(T<=t) two-tail | 1.06E-19 | 0.008 | 0.001 |  |  |
| Power (1- *ß*) | 0.999 | 0.990 | 0.999 |  |  |
| Number of sessions | 174 | 174 | 30 | 174 |  |
| Number of horses | 56 | 56 | 30 | 56 |  |
| NRC (2007) - Converted from DE to ME by multiplying DE by .8318, the mean ME/DE ratio from the 60 diets in this study | | | | |  |
| INRA (2011) UFC converted to ME using INRA's ME value of 1 kg of barley, 12.05 MJ, converting MBW to BW on the basis of a 500 kg horse | | | | |  |
| Block (2016) EWpa converted to ME using the CVB's ME value of 1 kg of oats, 11.4 MJ, and converting MBW to BW on the basis of a 500 kg horse | | | | | |
| It was only practical to use the CVB system for sessions on a gallop or track, hence the lower number of sessions evaluated | | | |  |  |
| MOE = margin of error, ME = metabolisable energy |  |  |  |  |  |

**Table 7: Metabolisable energy and dry matter intake by type of feed: in total, for exercise and for maintenance for 60 performance horses**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **Source of ME** | | **ME Content of Feeds** | | **Total DM Intake** | | **Total ME Intake** | | **ME Intake for exercise** | | **ME Intake for maint.** | |
|  |  | *%* | | *MJ ME / kg DM* | | *kg DM kg BW-1 d-1* | | *MJ ME kg BW-1 d-1* | | *MJ ME kg BW-1 d-1* | | *MJ ME kg BW-1 d-1* | |
| *Training discipline* | *n=* | *Mean* | *MOE* | *Mean* | *MOE* | *Mean* | *MOE* | *Mean* | *MOE* | *Mean* | *MOE* | *Mean* | *MOE* |
| **Dressage** | 10 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Forage and chaff |  | 61.7% | 11.1% | 7.1 | 2.1% | 0.013 | 11.1% | 0.090 | 11.3% | 0.0116 | 15.5% | 0.0783 | 11.0% |
| Other feed |  | 38.3% | 18.7% | 11.2 | 4.0% | 0.005 | 15.8% | 0.056 | 17.5% | 0.0066 | 15.8% | 0.0492 | 17.9% |
|  |  | **100.0%** |  |  |  | **0.018** | 3.8% | **0.146** | 2.2% | **0.0182** | 6.9% | **0.1275** | 2.4% |
| **Eventing** | 5 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Forage and chaff |  | 71.8% | 11.6% | 7.1 | 2.7% | 0.014 | 12.1% | 0.102 | 20.8% | 0.0146 | 17.8% | 0.0873 | 16.2% |
| Other feed |  | 28.2% | 22.2% | 10.3 | 9.6% | 0.004 | 19.2% | 0.040 | 14.4% | 0.0054 | 20.0% | 0.0346 | 22.6% |
|  |  | **100.0%** |  |  |  | **0.018** | 7.3% | **0.142** | 9.1% | **0.0199** | 13.0% | **0.1220** | 11.8% |
| **Showjumping** | 15 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Forage and chaff |  | 60.2% | 6.8% | 6.5 | 1.8% | 0.014 | 6.3% | 0.089 | 11.9% | 0.0121 | 6.0% | 0.0766 | 8.2% |
| Other feed |  | 39.8% | 22.9% | 9.8 | 4.0% | 0.006 | 10.8% | 0.059 | 7.5% | 0.0090 | 15.7% | 0.0497 | 11.4% |
|  |  | **100.0%** |  |  |  | **0.019** | 3.4% | **0.147** | 3.6% | **0.0210** | 7.8% | **0.1263** | 3.7% |
| **All rounders** | 26 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Forage and chaff |  | 77.2% | 4.0% | 6.7 | 1.4% | 0.015 | 4.5% | 0.101 | 5.1% | 0.0130 | 6.7% | 0.0884 | 5.1% |
| Other feed |  | 22.8% | 13.6% | 9.5 | 2.9% | 0.003 | 14.1% | 0.030 | 13.7% | 0.0039 | 15.6% | 0.0259 | 13.7% |
|  |  | **100.0%** |  |  |  | **0.018** | 2.7% | **0.131** | 2.5% | **0.0170** | 5.6% | **0.1143** | 2.6% |
| **Inactive** | 4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Forage and chaff |  | 70.3% | 10.6% | 6.5 | 3.0% | 0.013 | 17.0% | 0.088 | 19.2% | 0.0019 | 52.4% | 0.0860 | 20.2% |
| Other feed |  | 29.7% | 22.9% | 9.8 | 4.5% | 0.004 | 27.2% | 0.037 | 29.6% | 0.0016 | 51.2% | 0.0356 | 28.8% |
|  |  | **100.0%** |  |  |  | **0.017** | 11.5% | **0.125** | 10.6% | **0.0035** | 51.8% | **0.1216** | 10.9% |
| **All horses** | 60 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Forage and chaff |  | 69.1% | 4.9% | 6.7 | 1.4% | 0.014 | 5.0% | 0.095 | 3.9% | 0.0126 | 4.8% | 0.0835 | 4.1% |
| Other feed |  | 30.9% | 10.9% | 10.0 | 2.9% | 0.004 | 11.0% | 0.043 | 8.3% | 0.0059 | 10.0% | 0.0371 | 8.2% |
|  |  | **100.0%** |  |  |  | **0.018** | 2.7% | **0.138** | 1.9% | **0.0185** | 4.0% | **0.1206** | 2.0% |
| MOE = margin of error, ME = metabolisable energy, BW = bodyweight, DM = dry matter | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Mean ME Intake for exercise for "All horses" excludes "inactive horses". | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Table 8: Metabolisable energy and dry matter intake by type of feed, in total and for maintenance, for 60 performance horses in the UK and Switzerland**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Source of ME** | |  | **Total DM Intake** | |  | **DM Intake for Maintenance** | |  | **ME Content of Feeds** | |  | **ME for Maintenance** |
|  | *(%)* | |  | *(g kg BW-1 day-1)* | |  | *(g kg BW-1 day-1)* | |  | *(MJ ME / kg DM)* | |  | *(MJ ME kg BW-1 d-1)* |
|  | *Mean* | *MOE* |  | *Mean* | *MOE* |  | *Mean* | *MOE* |  | *Mean* | *MOE* |  |  |
| **UK horses** *(n=30)* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Forage and chaff | 82.5% | 2.7% |  | 16.2 | 4.2% |  | 14.3 | 4.4% |  | 7.1 | 0.8% |  | 0.1007 |
| Other feed | 17.5% | 2.7% |  | 2.3 | 11.2% |  | 2.0 | 11.1% |  | 9.7 | 4.0% |  | 0.0195 |
| **Total** | **100.0%** |  |  | **18.5** | **3.1%** |  | **16.3** | **3.4%** |  |  |  |  | **0.1202** |
| **Swiss horses** *(n=30)* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Forage and chaff | 55.3% | 4.2% |  | 12.1 | 4.2% |  | 10.5 | 4.2% |  | 6.4 | 1.3% |  | 0.0668 |
| Other feed | 44.7% | 4.2% |  | 6.1 | 5.8% |  | 5.3 | 5.6% |  | 10.2 | 2.0% |  | 0.0544 |
| **Total** | **100.0%** |  |  | **18.2** | **2.2%** |  | **15.8** | **2.1%** |  |  |  |  | **0.1211** |
| ME = metabolisable energy, DM = dry matter, BW = bodyweight, MOE = margin of error | | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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**Table 9: Individual field maintenance requirements for 15 horses while in a state of constant BW (energy balance)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | **Energy expenditure for maintenance** | | | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | **Mean** | **SD** | **CV** | | **Conf. Int.** | | **Mean** | |
| **Horse** | **Breed** | **Training** | **Weight** | **Age** | **Weeks** | *MJ ME* | *MJ ME* | |  | | *MJ ME* | | *MJ ME* | |
|  |  | **Status** |  |  | **in study** | *kg BW-1 d-1* | *kg BW-1 d-1* | | *%* | | *kg BW-1 d-1* | | *kg MBW-1 d-1* | |
| UK1 | Irish x Trakehaner | Dressage | 647 | 12 | 34 | 0.109 | 0.021 | 19.3% | | 0.0070 | | 0.570 | |
| UK2 | Dutch warmblood | Dressage | 650 | 10 | 42 | 0.130 | 0.019 | 14.3% | | 0.0056 | | 0.661 | |
| UK3 | Thoroughbred | All rounder | 549 | 10 | 28 | 0.126 | 0.007 | 5.8% | | 0.0027 | | 0.580 | |
| UK4 | Irish Sporting horse | Dressage | 650 | 17 | 27 | 0.107 | 0.003 | 3.0% | | 0.0012 | | 0.561 | |
| UK5 | Welsh Sec. D | Inactive/Control | 523 | 20 | 13 | 0.082 | 0.017 | 20.6% | | 0.0093 | | 0.394 | |
| UK6 | Danish Warmblood | Dressage | 582 | 10 | 12 | 0.093 | 0.009 | 9.3% | | 0.0049 | | 0.455 | |
| UK7 | Cleveland Bay x TB | Dressage | 737 | 9 | 12 | 0.127 | 0.043 | 6.5% | | 0.0244 | | 0.659 | |
| UK8 | KWPN | Inactive/Control | 630 | 9 | 9 | 0.136 | 0.012 | 8.5% | | 0.0076 | | 0.683 | |
| UK9 | Trakehaner x TB | All rounder | 667 | 20 | 13 | 0.087 | 0.006 | 7.3% | | 0.0035 | | 0.443 | |
| UK10 | Thoroughbred | Eventing | 483 | 5 | 12 | 0.183 | 0.009 | 4.8% | | 0.0049 | | 0.859 | |
| Swiss1 | Irish Sporting Horse | All rounder | 637 | 18 | 43 | 0.113 | 0.007 | 5.9% | | 0.0064 | | 0.571 | |
| Swiss 2 | German warmblood | Inactive/Control | 510 | 16 | 32 | 0.121 | 0.001 | 1.1% | | 0.0026 | | 0.584 | |
| Swiss 3 | Dutch warmblood | Inactive/Control | 644 | 17 | 31 | 0.119 | 0.001 | 0.6% | | 0.0017 | | 0.596 | |
| Swiss 4 | Swiss warmblood | All rounder | 513 | 22 | 21 | 0.128 | 0.004 | 3.2% | | 0.0046 | | 0.610 | |
| Swiss 5 | Selle Francais | Jumping | 572 | 8 | 28 | 0.112 | 0.008 | 7.0% | | 0.0175 | | 0.604 | |
| **Mean** |  |  | **600** | **14** | **24** | **0.1182** |  | **7.8%** | |  | | **0.5887** | |
| SD |  |  |  |  |  | 0.023 |  |  | |  | | 0.107 | |
| Coefficient of variation | |  |  |  |  | 19.7% |  |  | |  | | 18.2% | |
| Confidence interval (P < 0.05) | |  |  |  |  | 0.013 |  |  | |  | | 0.058 | |
| Margin of error | |  |  |  |  | 5.4% |  |  | |  | | 4.9% | |
| ME = metabolisable energy, BW = bodyweight | | | | | | | |  | |  | |  | |

**Table 10: Comparison of maintenance recommendations**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  | **Maintenance requirement** | | | | |  | **Comparison to this Study⁵** | | |
|  |  |  | MJ DE | UFC | EWpa | MJ ME | MJ ME |  | % over/ | *P*(T<=t) two-tail | Power |
| **Source** | **Activity Level** | **Horse type** | *kg BW/d* | *kg BW/day* | *kg BW/d* | *kg BW/d* | *kg MBW/d* |  | (under) |  |  |
| This Study (2 weeks) |  | Olympic disciplines |  |  |  | 0.1205 | 0.5853 |  | -1.1% |  |  |
| This Study (long-term) |  | Olympic disciplines |  |  |  | 0.1180 | 0.5920 |  |  |  |  |
| NRC *(US)* 1 | Sedentary | All horses | 0.1267 |  |  | 0.1054 |  |  | -10.7% |  |  |
| NRC *(US)*1 | Average voluntary | All horses | 0.1392 |  |  | 0.1158 |  |  | -1.9% | 0.08675 | 0.68 |
| NRC *(US)* 1 | Elevated voluntary | All horses | 0.1517 |  |  | 0.1266 |  |  | 7.3% |  |  |
| German 2 | Fully trained | Warmbloods |  |  |  | 0.1294 | 0.6120 |  | 3.4% |  |  |
| German 2 | Moderately trained | Warmbloods |  |  |  | 0.1122 | 0.5304 |  | -10.4% | 1.25E-05 | 0.99 |
| INRA, *(French) 3* | Working period | Riding horse category | | 0.0373 |  | 0.1141 | 0.5394 |  | -8.9% | 8.02E-06 | 0.99 |
| CVB *(Dutch) 4* | Working horses | Non-TB mare/gelding | |  | 0.0411 | 0.0991 | 0.4685 |  | -20.9% | 1.45E-13 | 0.99 |
| 1 - NRC (2007) (US)Converted to ME by multiplying DE by .8318, the mean ME/DE ratio from the 60 diets in this study | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 -Kienzle, et al. (2010) (German)Converted MBW to BW on the basis of a 500 kg horse plus 2% supplement for turnout status | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3- INRA (2011) (France) UFC converted to ME using the ME value of 1 kg of barley, 12.05 MJ, converting MBW to BW on the basis of a 500 kg horse plus 5% for a "riding" horse and 15% for working | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4- Block (2016) (Dutch) EWpa converted to ME using the ME value of 1 kg of oats, 11.4 MJ, and converting MBW to BW on the basis of a 500 kg horse plus 5% supplement for working status | | | | | | | | | | |  |
| 5- Over / (under) compared to the ME / kg MBW finding of this Study, except NRC, which is compared to ME kg / BW.  DE = digestible energy, ME = metabolisable energy, UFC = unité fourragèr de cheval, EWpa = Energiewaarde paard  BW = bodyweight, MBW = metabolic bodyweight, TB = Thoroughbred | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |