

Wally Comments on His Diet

By Cindy Hale and Wally

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Today I'm handing the blogging duties over to Wally. He has a lot to say. Why? Because he's on a diet. My big Paint gelding is the World's Greatest Snacker. If he were a person, he'd spend his spare time curled up on the couch shoving Doritos into his mouth. I am not guilt free in this. I enabled Wally. It was easier to toss him a half-flake of orchard grass or pour a small scoop of pellets into his feeder than worry about him trying to undo the gate latch or prune the eucalyptus trees. If his mouth was kept busy, his impish mind was occupied. The result? Wally got too fat. When Jennifer, my vet, was treating him for his hoof abscess, she counseled me on Wally's burgeoning girth line. So now, while Wally is still living at my parents' place—which is only a few blocks away—he has to make do with far less food than I was giving him here. The gravy train has left the station. And Wally is no longer aboard. Thus, Wally speaks:

"You tell me: Does this saddle make my butt look big? Be honest. Am I really fat? Or just heavily muscled? Hey, carrying a little extra weight is in my genes. My daddy was an APHA Supreme Halter Champion. That kind of physique comes at a price. And that price would be lots of food, which I'm not getting here. Next thing you know, someone on the trail will mistake me for an Egyptian-bred Arabian." "Oh, these people think they're so smart, cuttin' my caloric intake. Ha! I'll show them! I can munch on pretty much anything. The bark of this cottonwood tree looks appealing. Deer eat it. Why can't a horse? Hmm... Let me give it a try... YUCK! Not the gustatory delight I was expecting. What does a horse have to do to get some sweet feed or peppermints around here?" "Ah, now this is more like it. After a brisk ride, where I was forced to break a sweat, I'm allowed to munch on some grass while my stall is cleaned. If I eat really really fast, and cram as much grass as my mouth can possibly hold into every bite, perhaps I can make up for the fact that I don't get to order off the lunch menu anymore." "Someone mentioned that my back was so fat and wide that it could be used as a table. As an experiment, a mug and plate was placed on my back. I see no humor in the fact that it was done while I was groveling in my feed tub for a few tiny morsels of carrot nubbins."

Don't worry about Wally. He won't starve. He'll always be pleasantly plump. But I want him to be healthy for as long as possible, and being overweight is not a good thing. Not only can it lead to metabolic disorders, but extra weight puts extra strain on a horse's legs. I'll try to explain that to Wally. But somehow I don't think he'll be listening.

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