

LSU for Shire Horses

Extracts from Nibblers online discussion group

I have failed to find a specific reference for horses related to GLU, and horses usually are measured by 'hands' high' rather than weight. However, I do have average weights for heavy horses. A Shire stallion weighs circa 940 kg in working condition, and a Suffolk stallion circa 900 kg - in other words, similar to medium-large cattle.

Trying to give them a GLU rating is complicated by their grazing behaviour. They are less efficient with single-species grazing (where areas are left ungrazed) than they are in mixed grazing systems. There are many variables, but I suspect your suggested 0.6-0.8 for ponies and circa 1.0 for horses is not too far from the mark.

Lawrence

Tom - I was hoping someone might know the precise answer to this but in the meantime I would offer the following thoughts as a 'starter for ten':

1. Ponies I think have been given from approx 0.6 to 0.8 of an LSU depending on their size and appetite.
2. Since Shires are much bigger and heavier, and are 'work' horses, presumably with a pretty high metabolic rate as a result, then they would come out much higher. I would have thought they would be not less than 1.0 LSU and could even be more than that.

Someone out there must know the accurate answer?

John

John Bacon, Senior Land Manager, Land Management Unit, English Nature

I too awaited a precise answer, but now that you have started I'll join in. I can't find an average weight but have read that a Shire stallion can weigh 'up to a tonne'. Perhaps 800 kg would be a reasonable guess at an average adult weight, on which basis 1.5 LSU would be about right.

However, metabolic rate would be proportionately lower in a larger animal, assuming it was not a working Shire. In terms of grazing impact I understood that equines' LU value should be rated more highly than ruminants as they had to eat more to sustain their body weight. Too many competing variables for me to come to a conclusion!

> Richard C
