

# A NOVEL WATER ADDITIVE INCREASES VOLUNTARY WATER INTAKE IN HEALTHY HORSES

Excerpted from a study presented by Colorado State University at the AAEP Convention in Denver, Colorado, December 2025.

The simplest changes can mean the difference between drought or drink.

Keeping horses hydrated in times of stress – namely travel, hospitalization, or showing – can be challenging. This is furthered by the fact that when horses experience water losses through marked sweating or diarrhea, they may not drink enough to satisfy those fluid losses.

Dehydration, stress, and changes in routine are all risk factors for impaction colic. Colic is the leading cause for morbidity and mortality in horses, with 3.5-10% of the general population affected and additionally affecting up to 21% of horses hospitalized for causes not related to the gastrointestinal tract.

Finding ways to mitigate stress and dehydration in these settings are imperative in order to reduce this risk. It is the hope that maintaining appropriate levels of hydration can help with shorter hospitalizations and healthier horses.

In 2020, a 'sweet tea' study was published. The authors found that adding one cup of sweet feed to plain water – colloquially known as 'sweet tea' – modestly improved voluntary water intake in hospitalized horses. This preference was compared to plain water, water flavored with peppermint extract, and apple flavored electrolytes. Interestingly, the horses offered peppermint flavored water and apple flavored electrolyte water had an increase in voluntary water intake. However, the horses drank more from the unflavored bucket than the flavored one. This study highlights that horses have flavor preferences when it comes to water, but there was definitely room on the market to expand and have a more potent product.

In 2022, a Novel Water Additive was introduced to the market. This additive contained these ingredients: sugar, alfalfa, and electrolytes.

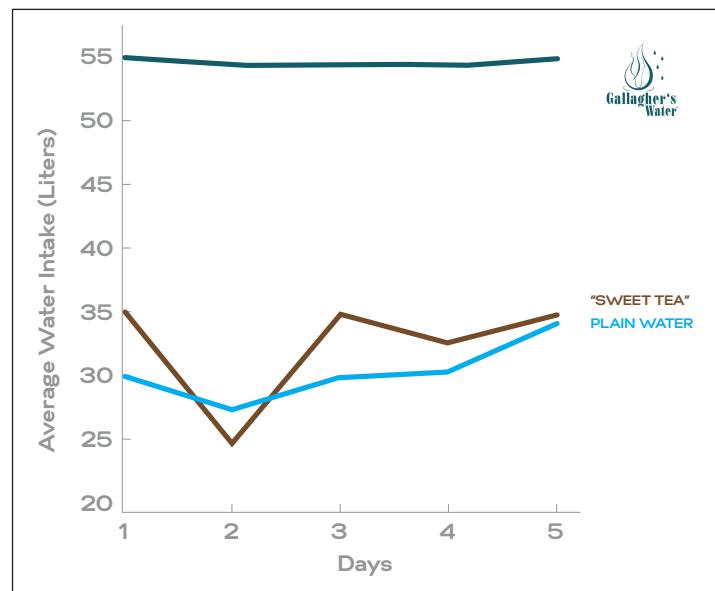
Louisiana State University conducted a study investigating voluntary water intake in healthy horses compared to plain water. This team found that horses drinking with the Novel Water Additive had lower dehydration scores as well as lower potassium, BUN, and creatine levels in urine samples.

Additionally, the horses in the novel water additive group drank 33 gallons or 125L of water over the 72-hour treatment period compared to 20 gallons or 75L in the control group. This study demonstrated that horses have strong preferences for drinking water flavored with the Novel Water Additive.

There was room to examine the relationship between this Novel Water Additive and 'sweet tea'. That's where our study comes in.

The objective of this study was to determine if a Novel Water Additive would increase voluntary water intake in horses compared to 'sweet tea' and plain tap water.

Horses offered the Novel Water Additive were drinking an average over 50L per day across the study weeks. That's equivalent to 2.3 five-gallon buckets.



This graph demonstrates the daily trend of average water intake across all three groups over a five day period. As seen by the green line at the top, the horses remained consistently interested in the Novel Water Additive across the study period. On day two, horses in the 'sweet tea' group had a mild drop in water intake, likely due to acclimating to the new flavor. However, both this group and the control group ultimately had a positive increase in drinking water throughout the study period.

The Novel Water Additive had a strong, sustained, positive impact on voluntary water intake. Our hypothesis were supported that the horses preferred the Novel Water Additive to 'sweet tea' or plain water.

It's important to note that many of the horses quickly drank the entire bucket of Novel Water Additive as soon as it was placed in their stall. It's possible that these horses would have drank even more, or maybe their interest would have leveled out, had this been offered to them continually throughout the day.

A video of the entire presentation may be viewed on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/nr07LYdV51c?si=22WB6i9nkQ1bK9bF>



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