



News Release

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Contact: Natasha Mahanes Kelly Goss
 Merial Sullivan Higdon & Sink
 (678) 638-3690 (816) 283-4730
 natasha.mahanes@merial.com kelly.goss@shscom.com

Results from Merial’s Nationwide Scopings Show All Horses At Risk for Stomach Ulcers

Duluth, GA. – February 17, 2011 – For the past three years, Merial has hosted gastroscopy events across the country, and the results consistently show stomach ulcers are a threat to horses of all breeds and disciplines. From 2008 through 2010, veterinarians scoped 3,354 horses, with more than 58 percent of them identified with some grade of stomach ulcer.¹ In 2010 alone, 644 horses of varying disciplines from 30 states had some ulceration as identified by gastroscopy.¹

- 328 horses, 28 percent, with Grade 1 ulcers (mild ulcers with small lesions or damaged tissue)
- 232 horses, 20 percent, with Grade 2 ulcers (moderate ulcers with large lesions)
- 84 horses, 7 percent, with Grade 3 ulcers (extensive lesions with deep ulceration and bleeding)
- 74 percent of racing horses (113 participating)
- 60 percent of hunter jumper horses (119 participating)
- 55 percent of dressage horses (116 participating)

“Equine stomach ulcers, also called Equine Gastric Ulcer Syndrome or EGUS, create a painful condition that can reduce your horse’s performance and can lead to colic, weight loss or loss of condition,”² says April Knudson, DVM, Equine Specialist for Merial’s Large Animal Veterinary Services. “And wherever there is stress, there can be stomach ulcers. A horse is sensitive and may experience stress when exposed to situations one would think of as normal. Transporting a horse, increased stall time, limited turnout, training and competition can all contribute to EGUS.³ More surprising, a horse can develop stomach ulcers in as few as 5 days.”⁴

The only definitive way to diagnose a horse with stomach ulcers is for a veterinarian to look at the stomach with an endoscope. Because there aren’t many endoscopes in the country, Merial coordinated with universities and veterinary practices to bring in the equipment to have these horses evaluated by experienced veterinarians. Dr. Knudson notes that these scoping results confirm what studies have found previously – that horses of all competitive disciplines are at risk for stomach ulcers.^{5,6,7}

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Despite all of the data that supports the prevalence of equine stomach ulcers, approximately 75 percent of veterinarians in a 2008 study “agreed or strongly agreed” that EGUS is under-diagnosed even though it can negatively impact a horse’s performance and disposition.”⁸ And results from 2010 market research show that while 74 percent of horse owners have some concern about equine stomach ulcers,⁸ most have not used an EGUS therapy in the past 12 months.⁹

“Clearly, there is still a significant need for continued education about EGUS, as well as the importance of prevention,” says Dr. Knudson. “Merial remains committed to raising awareness about this serious health threat. In addition to the scoping events, we participate in numerous equine events throughout the country each year where we have the opportunity to talk one on one with horse owners, trainers and veterinarians. For competitive horse owners, it’s critically important to discuss stomach ulcer prevention, because ulcers can diminish the hard work, training and commitment both horse and rider have worked so hard to achieve.”

Preventing stomach ulcers is not only better for the health of the horse, but it is also more cost effective. But for those horses diagnosed with stomach ulcers, Dr. Knudson recommends a course of GASTROGARD® (omeprazole) to treat them. GASTROGARD is the only FDA-approved product to treat and heal stomach ulcers.¹⁰

Dr. Knudson reminds owners, though, that if horses are exposed to stressful situations again, stomach ulcers can return – even after completion of a successful treatment program. She recommends using ULCERGARD® (omeprazole) during times of stress, which is the only FDA-approved preventive for stomach ulcers.^{11,*}

Merial is a world-leading, innovation-driven animal health company, providing a comprehensive range of products to enhance the health, well-being and performance of a wide range of animals. Merial employs approximately 5,600 people and operates in more than 150 countries worldwide. Its 2010 sales were more than \$2.6 billion. Merial is the Animal Health subsidiary of sanofi-aventis. For more information, please see www.merial.com.

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IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Caution: Safety of GASTROGARD in pregnant or lactating mares has not been determined.

ULCERGARD can be used in horses that weigh at least 600 pounds. Safety in pregnant mares has not been determined.

*When treated for eight to 28 days, ULCERGARD is proven to effectively prevent gastric ulcers in horses exposed to stressful conditions.

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¹ Data on file at Merial.

² Radostits OM, et al. *Veterinary Medicine: A textbook of the diseases of cattle, horses, sheep, pigs and goats*. Philadelphia: WB Saunders Co.;2007:237-241.

³ ULCERGARD product label.

⁴ McClure, SR, et al. Gastric ulcer development in horses in a simulated show or training environment. *JAVMA*. 2005;227(5):775-777.

⁵ de Bruijn M, Schutrups AH, Seesing EHAL. Prevalence of equine gastric ulceration syndrome in standardbreds. *Veterinary Record*. 2009;164:814-815.

⁶ Murray MJ, Schusser GF, Pipers FS, Gross SJ. Factors associated with gastric lesions in thoroughbred racehorses. *Equine Vet J*. 1996;28:368-374.

⁷ Mitchell RD. Prevalence of gastric ulcers in hunter/jumper and dressage horses evaluated for poor performance. Association for Equine Sports Medicine September 2001.

⁸ Data on file at Merial, Market Directions Study.

⁹ Market research, data on file at Merial.

¹⁰ Freedom of Information Summary for GASTROGARD.

¹¹ Freedom of Information Summary for ULCERGARD.