



Reining Trainer Uses Care When Bringing Along Young Horses

Once Sebastian Petroll arrived from Germany in 2001, it didn't take long for him to become a household name in reining circles. In fact, since then, not only has he captured multiple Level 1 and 2 titles and become a sought-after trainer, but he's also earned his National Reining Horse Association (NRHA) judge's card and most recently was named to the NRHA Board of Directors and the Stewards Committee.

What's led to his arena success and the recognition by his peers? Petroll trains his horses for longevity and has developed a reputation for having horses that last. "These Futurity and Derby horses are just two-year-olds when we start them – and keeping that in mind for every aspect of training is really important," Petroll says. "We want them strong – mind and body – not just for their Futurity and Derby years, but for a really long time."

To achieve that goal, Petroll remains cognizant of both their possibilities and limitations. "These young horses will never have to learn so much in such a short amount of time ever again," he says. "And most of them will never have such a hectic show schedule again. How we handle them during this really important time in their lives is crucial to their success down the road."

Petroll's training plans are individualized, focusing on maximizing the potential of each horse and at a pace suited to the horse. Another important aspect to the overall development of each horse is that horse's health care plan. "If a horse doesn't feel good, it doesn't matter how well it is trained or how talented it is, that horse won't perform well," he says.

Petroll understands one of the threats to horse health is the development of stomach ulcers, especially since the young horses he works with are exposed to so many potentially stressful situations. "Everything we do with these horses is new," he says. "It's easy to see how they might get upset or overwhelmed."

To help prevent the development of ulcers in the horses he cares for, Petroll relies on ULCERGARD® (omeprazole), the only proven and Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved product for equine stomach ulcer prevention.¹ He's proactive, and always uses ULCERGARD on horses that have a history of being nervous in show environments.

April Knudson, DVM, Manager, Merial Large Animal Veterinary Services, says horses like Petroll's, that are exposed to such things as traveling, training, competition and stall confinement¹ are at risk for stomach ulcers. "Horses are very sensitive. Anytime you take them out of their normal routine and environment, you can be setting the stage for stomach ulcers," she says. "Young, inexperienced horses that are being asked to perform at high levels might be even more susceptible simply because everything is new to them. They can even appear to be handling new stressors, but develop ulcers anyway."

Clinical information confirms Dr. Knudson's belief. In gastric endoscopy events sponsored by Merial over a four-year period, the results have proven that stomach ulcers are a threat to all breeds and disciplines.² In fact, of the reining horses scoped, 76 percent were found to have stomach ulcers, while 69 percent of the cutting horses were diagnosed with stomach ulcers.²

"We know stomach ulcers are prevalent in all types of horses," says Dr. Knudson. "Trainers and owners don't want horses sidelined because of them, so horse owners should also use caution when deciding what to use to prevent them," she says. "Unfortunately, there are products available that haven't been proven to work and don't have FDA approval. There is only one product that has been proven, and is FDA-approved to prevent equine stomach ulcers – ULCERGARD."

The FDA approval process is important because it ensures a product has been tested for safety and efficacy in the target animal.³ Horse owners can get more information about drugs and what the FDA approval process means by going to EquineDrugFacts.com. For more information about ULCERGARD, visit ulcergard.com.

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

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¹ULCERGARD product label.

²Data on file at Merial.

³Animal Health Institute and American Veterinary Medical Association and American Veterinary Distributors Association. Veterinary Compounding. Available at: http://www.aaep.org/siteadmin/modules/page_editor/images/files/AHI%20Compounding.pdf. Accessed March 14, 2013.