

# NSAIDs AND YOUR HORSE



## WHAT YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT NSAIDs AND YOUR HORSE

Anyone current to rule changes affecting horses competing at USEF licensed competitions has heard a lot about 'NSAIDs' and the 'one-NSAID rule.' Important rule changes were discussed and eventually approved at the USEF Annual Meeting in January, 2010. Read on to learn how NSAIDs affect our horses and what your responsibility is, as a rider, owner, or trainer, regarding the new NSAID rules.

NSAID stands for non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug. These drugs are used to treat inflammation and in this manner provide pain relief for osteoarthritis, colic, soft tissue injuries, and to treat fevers. NSAIDs are also commonly used by people and are readily available over the counter. Common NSAIDs for human-use include Advil®, Tylenol® and Aleve®.

The two most commonly used NSAIDs in horses are phenylbutazone "Bute" and flunixin meglumine (Banamine®). However, there are seven NSAIDs approved for use (with quantitative restrictions) under current USEF rules. These include phenylbutazone "Bute", flunixin (Banamine®), naproxen (Naprosyn®), ketoprofen (Ketofen®), meclufenamic acid (Arquel®), firocoxib (Equioxx®) and the topical anti-inflammatory, diclofenac (Surpass®).

Since 1998, the USEF Equine Drugs and Medications Rule has allowed the presence of no more than two approved NSAIDs in a horse at the time of competition. One important exception to the rule is that the presence of both phenylbutazone "Bute" and flunixin (Banamine®) in a horse at the time of competition is never permitted. Over the years, ongoing research has revealed that not only is there little or no benefit to administering more than one NSAID to a horse for most medical concerns, it can actually cause potentially harmful, even severe side effects. Outwardly, diarrhea, loss of appetite, and a dull attitude can be seen. Each of these symptoms can be clinical signs of more severe colic-related problems including gastric and colonic ulceration, large colon and cecal impaction, kidney damage, and right dorsal colitis.

Motivated by its commitment to the welfare of the horse, USEF leadership has taken action regarding the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and effective December 1, 2011, will restrict use to a single NSAID. The USEF is joining other major groups in adopting a 'one NSAID rule.' This includes the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA) and Equine Canada.

While the presence of two NSAIDs in a horse will still be allowed prior to December 2011, it is important to note that new restrictions are in place concerning their use. Beginning April, 1, 2010, anyone using two NSAIDs in a



horse at a USEF-licensed competition will be required to complete and file a NSAID Disclosure Form with the USEF Steward/Technical Delegate or their Designated Competition Office Representative. This form is available at any USEF competition and at <http://www.usef.org/documents/drugsMeds/NSAIDDisclosureForm.pdf>. This form will be used to educate owners, riders, and trainers during the shift from allowing the use of two NSAIDs to restricting use to only one. The form will also allow the USEF Equine Drugs and Medications Program to collect valuable data regarding the use of NSAIDs.

Under this new reporting provision, if a horse is treated with more than one NSAID within five days preceding a USEF competition, the Person Responsible for that horse must fill out an NSAID Disclosure Form and submit it to the USEF Steward/Technical Delegate or their Designated Competition Office Representative prior to the horse competing. **The use of two NSAIDs cannot be reported on a USEF Medication Report Form.**

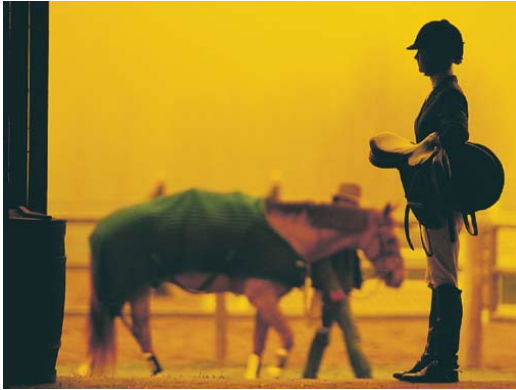
Effective April 1, 2010, and until December 1, 2011, if the use of two NSAIDs is detected in sample(s) collected from your horse, and a NSAID Disclosure Form has not been filed appropriately, you will receive a letter of finding from the USEF Regulations Department. For the first offense you will receive a letter stating that you neglected to fill out the form – a warning. The second violation may result in sanctions against you.

Please remember that if more than one NSAID has been administered to your horse within the five days prior to competing, the NSAID Disclosure Form must be filed prior to competing. Once the form is filed, it will be valid for five days. After five days, if additional NSAIDs are administered, even during the same competition, a new NSAID Disclosure Form must be completed and filed with the USEF Steward/Technical Delegate or their Designated Competition Office Representative.





For more information, please visit the Drugs & Medications link at [usef.org](http://usef.org), or call 800.633.2472.



#### USEF Equine Drugs & Medications Program

- Promote Fairness
- Ensure Welfare
- Stay Informed
- Learn About the New Rule

#### PLEASE DIRECT ALL INQUIRES TO:

United States Equestrian Federation®  
Equine Drugs and Medications Program  
956 King Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43212  
Phone: 800.633.2472  
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[www.usef.org](http://www.usef.org)



This Information Provided by the  
USEF Equine Drugs & Medications Program

For additional information regarding  
Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs  
please consult your veterinarian.



**UNITED STATES EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION**  
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