

# The Use of Two NSAIDs in Horses Competing at USEF Competitions as Reviewed Through NSAID Disclosure Form Submissions April 1, 2010 through March 31, 2011

At the 2010 USEF Annual Meeting held January 13-17, 2010, an important rule change was approved affecting the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) in competition horses. Over the years, ongoing veterinary 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.

Motivated by its commitment to the welfare of the horse, the USEF Board of Directors voted to amend its Therapeutic Drug Rule and restrict use to a single NSAID beginning December 1, 2011. Both the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) support the rule change, and USEF joins other organizations including the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA) and Equine Canada in making this important rule change.

In an effort to increase awareness and to properly prepare its membership regarding this important rule change, USEF decided to stage the implementation of this new rule. Beginning April, 1, 2010, anyone using two NSAIDs in a horse within five days prior to participating at a USEF-licensed competition was required to complete and file an NSAID Disclosure Form (NDF) with the USEF Steward/Technical Delegate or their Designated Competition Office Representative. After November 30, 2011, **the concurrent use of two NSAIDs in a horse will no longer be allowed**, and the filing of an NSAID Disclosure Form (NDF) will no longer be accepted.

As a result of the use of these forms over the past year, however, the USEF Equine Drugs and Medications Program has been able to collect valuable data regarding the use of NSAIDs in competition horses.

The following statistics were accumulated during the 12-month period from April 1, 2010 through March 31, 2011:

- 2593 Federation licensed competitions were held during this time frame.
  - 570 or 22% of these competitions had NDF's filed.
  - 2023 or 78% of these competitions had no NDF's filed.
- 121,990 Unique Horses competed during this time frame.
  - 2.4% of all Unique Horses competing had at least one NDF filed prior to competing.

Of that 2.4% of Unique Horses:

- 1,972 (or 67.6%) had only one NDF filed.
  - 817 (or 28.0%) had 2-5 NDF's filed.
  - 107 (or 3.7%) had 6-10 NDF's filed.
  - 23 (or 0.8%) had more than 10 NDF's filed.
- The average age of horses competing on two NSAIDs was 10 years of age.

- Considering entries, **0.41% of all Entries had at least one NDF filed.**
  - **Less than one half of one percent of all entries in USEF licensed competitions were competing under the possible influence of two different NSAID's.**
  
- 29,948 Unique Trainers competed horses at USEF- licensed competitions during this time frame. Of those Unique Trainers, 1,022 ( or 3.4% ) filed at least 1 NDF:
  - Of that 3.4% of Trainers filing at least one NDF:
    - 52.7% submitted only one NDF.
    - 75.9% off trainers submitting NDF's submitted three or fewer NDF's

An additional rule change involving NSAID administration at USEF licensed competitions was approved by the USEF Board of Directors during their meeting in January of this year. Effective December 1, 2011, following the move to permitting only one NSAID to be present in the same plasma or urine sample, there is a provision for the emergency use of flunixin (Banamine®) (GR411.3).

This rule allows for the emergency administration of flunixin (Banamine®) by a veterinarian to treat colic or an ophthalmic emergency. It requires that a medication report be filed if the horse has been previously administered an NSAID listed in GR410 (a) through (g), other than flunixin, within the three days prior. It will additionally require that the **USEF Medication Report Form** be signed by the veterinarian who administered the flunixin (Banamine®) and the same medication report should document a **24-hour withdrawal** from competition following the administration of flunixin (GR411.3). **It is important to note that compliance with this rule is dependent upon the flunixin (Banamine®) being administered by a licensed veterinarian following a physical exam.**

When the NSAID rule becomes effective December 1, 2011, it is recommended that only one NSAID be administered to a horse within the three days prior to competing. If treating with more than one NSAID, please withdraw all but one NSAID at least three (3) days (72 hours) prior to competing in USEF licensed competitions. The emergency administration of flunixin (Banamine®) in addition to a previously administered NSAID within the three days prior to competing will be closely monitored.

Please direct all inquiries for additional information to the United States Equestrian Federations Equine Drugs and Medications Program by calling (800) 633-2472.