



Canadian Pari-Mutuel  
Agency

An Agency of Agriculture  
and Agri-Food Canada

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Agence canadienne  
du pari mutuel

Un organisme d'Agriculture  
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July 17, 2015

Mr. Jean Major  
CEO and Executive Director  
Ontario Racing Commission  
10 Carlson Court, Suite 400  
Toronto, ON M9W 6L2

Dear Mr. Major: *Jean:*

In June, 2015, the CPMA provided all provincial racing commissions with information resulting from research we had done on cobalt in race horses.

We understand the ORC will commence testing for cobalt on August 1, 2015 using a threshold in plasma of 50 ng/m. We are continuing to do research on cobalt and would like to provide you with additional information to help owners, trainers and veterinarians make informed decisions on the use of cobalt in race horses.

Cobalt is a naturally occurring trace element that is essential in all mammals, and present in horses at low levels. It is found in vitamin B12 (cyanocobalamin), several feedstuffs, supplements and veterinary preparations. Cobalt administered to excess in horses can have adverse side-effects.

Administration of some commercially available equine products containing cobalt revealed that the use of these products in the doses and routes given below did not produce cobalt levels above the proposed ORC threshold.

- Vitamaster® (IM) - 7mg cobalt gluconate\*, administered every other day for 3 administrations
- Hemostam® (IV) - 7mg cobalt gluconate\*, administered once daily for 5 days
- Vitamin B12 (IV) - 2mg administered every other day for 3 administrations
- Iron Power® (Oral) – administered as 60ml (22mg actual cobalt\*) twice daily for 7 days
- Total Control® (Oral) – administered as 37.5g (44.5mg cobalt sulfate\*) twice daily for 7 days
- Ultra-Fer 300® (Oral) – administered twice daily as 56.4g mornings (20mg actual cobalt\*), 28.4g afternoons (10mg actual cobalt\*) for 7 days, last administration was 56.4g
- Nutrequin® Classic Formula (Oral) – administered twice daily, 100g mornings (2.5g actual cobalt\*), 50g afternoons (1.25g actual cobalt\*) for 7 days, and last administration was 100g

\* Note – amounts as presented on product package

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The CPMA cautions that:

- Although the plasma concentrations of cobalt in these studies were all less than 30 ng/mL, these are the results from studies using one horse per product in a research environment. Horses in this study had received no supplemental cobalt for at least one year prior to participation in this study. Horses previously administered cobalt may require a longer elimination period.
- Elimination of cobalt from the horse is prolonged (i.e. the time it takes for half of the cobalt to be eliminated is about one week).
- Repeated administrations may result in cobalt accumulating in the horse which could elevate the level above the proposed threshold.
- The CPMA recommends that no supplemental cobalt from any source be administered within 48 hours of racing. Higher doses than those studied or repeated administrations may require a longer elimination period.
- The CPMA does not endorse any of the products tested, and makes no representations regarding the actual amount or consistency of cobalt in the products used for the study.

The CPMA emphasizes that the use of the information in this memo does not relieve or lessen any trainer's responsibility for assuring that, during a horse race upon which pari-mutuel betting is conducted, a horse is free from any drug listed in the Schedule to the *Pari-Mutuel Betting Supervision Regulations* including cobalt and for complying with provisions of the Regulations and ORC's rules of racing.

Owners, trainers or any other person in charge or having care of a race horse are strongly advised to consult their own veterinarian for advice and guidance in the use of all drugs.

Please feel free to share this information with owners, trainers and veterinarians as you deem appropriate.

Should you wish to discuss this issue further, please contact Dr. Adam Chambers ([Adam.Chambers@agr.gc.ca](mailto:Adam.Chambers@agr.gc.ca)).

Sincerely,



Steve Suttie

c.c.: Mr. Rob McKinney, ORC