

## **NRCHA Competitor Shawn Hays On Setting the Groundwork**

With the number of trophies, saddles, cinch down vests, buckles, plaques and romal reins Tammy Jo and Shawn Hays, Nocona, Texas, have won over the years in reined cow horse events, they could open their own shop. Competing on such talented stock as Shine Smartly (Shining Spark x Smartly Dressed), Hes Pretty Smart (Haidas Little Pep x Brilliant Little Lena) and Moonstruck Nic (Nic It In The Bud x Moonstruck Cat), just to name a few, the trainer and his wife have been in the winner's circle often enough to cause one to wonder – what's the secret to their success?

Ask Shawn Hays and he'll attribute some of his professional success to starting with healthy horses. "These horses, especially the young ones in the futurities, are being asked to compete at a high level in three different events: herd work, reining and fence work. They have to be at their best, physically and mentally, simply to do their jobs."

As part of his complete, overall health plan for each horse, Hays uses ULCERGARD® (omeprazole) to prevent the development of equine stomach ulcers. "The rigorous training schedule beforehand, followed by a show season in which the horses are hauled to different environments, can be stressful," he says. "Some handle the stress well, others don't." As a horseman, Shawn knows studies have shown stress can lead to stomach ulcers.<sup>1,2</sup>

During gastric endoscopy events sponsored by Merial over the past three years, the results have proven stomach ulcers are a threat to all breeds and disciplines.<sup>3</sup> In fact, of the reining horses scoped, 76% were diagnosed with stomach ulcers, while 69% of the cutting horses were found to have ulcers.<sup>3</sup>

April Knudson, DVM, equine specialist for Merial's Large Animal Veterinary Services, says the competitive environment is especially conducive to the development of gastric ulcers. "In addition to experiencing stress in a competitive environment, a horse is sensitive and may experience stress when exposed to situations one would think of as normal. Transporting a horse, increased stall time and limited turnout can all contribute to stomach ulcers.<sup>4</sup> More surprising, a horse can develop stomach ulcers in as few as five days."<sup>1</sup>

ULCERGARD is the only FDA-approved product for the prevention of ulcers. Just one daily dose has been proven effective in preventing stomach ulcers over both short and long periods of time.\*<sup>4</sup> ULCERGARD works by inhibiting the acid production at the acid pump, effectively preventing stomach ulcers before they become a problem.

To keep your horse feeling and working at its best, ask your veterinarian about ULCERGARD. If you suspect your horse may already have stomach ulcers, ask for a definitive gastroscopy or a presumptive diagnosis from your veterinarian. For the

treatment of equine gastric ulcers, GASTROGARD® (omeprazole) is the only FDA approved medication.

“We do everything we can to help make sure our horses are able to do their jobs,” says Shawn. “Using ULCERGARD is just one more thing we can do to keep a health issue like stomach ulcers from hindering their ability to perform.”

### **About Merial**

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 a Sanofi company.

For more information, please see [www.merial.com](http://www.merial.com).

### **Important Safety Information**

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

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

\*When treated for 8 to 28 days, ULCERGARD is proven to effectively prevent stomach ulcers in horses exposed to stressful conditions.

<sup>1</sup> McClure SR, Carithers DS, Gross SJ, Murray MJ. Gastric ulcer development in horses in a simulated show or training environment. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2005; 227(5):775-777.

<sup>2</sup> Mitchell, RD. Prevalence of gastric ulcers in hunter/jumper and dressage horses evaluated for poor performance. Association for Equine Sports Medicine September 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Data on file at Merial.

<sup>4</sup> ULCERGARD product label.

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