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## Merry Christmas to All

2015 was a tough year for many, with the lower dairy payout and the forecast of a severe El Nino this summer.

Now that the festive season is here the team at EA wish all their clients a very merry Christmas and hope for a prosperous 2016 for all.

We had the opportunity to have the whole rep

team together before Christmas so the happy family that is the EA rep force are keen to pass on the best of Christmas cheer to all.

We are eagerly looking forward to the New Year with exciting news.

One new product, Drink Up, is featured inside and this will be a bonus for all equine customers.

It fills a niche in the market, is very affordable and has been a huge success overseas.

There is more great news with two highly specialized antibiotics through registration. These both fill special gaps in prescribing routines thus fulfilling our position as "The Source" of veterinary remedies.

## Makeover For Awapuni

The announcement of an \$8 million makeover for Awapuni Raceway is a good riposte for the article on thoroughbred racing sustainability on page 4.

This can only be good news for a vital equine area, the Central Districts, and sets Palmerston North as a racing hub along with Auckland and Christchurch and the opportunity to have cross code cup weeks like in those cities.

What impact will that have on greyhound racing in Wanganui? What benefits and makeovers, if

any, will be in store for Harness Racing in the region.

It is all very well to promote cup week themes but there needs to be a little for everybody for that to succeed. Although the greyhound code itself has long since learnt to cope with off course turnover only.

In the meantime it does seem a massive, and welcome, boost

for the area and well done both the Racing Board and the city of Palmerston North itself for their co-operation.



## Giving Sets

It appears that small animal practitioners are more *au fait* with giving sets than those in large animal practice; maybe this is because they are mostly administered by nurses.

There has been the odd person wondering how to get Metabolase to flow via a giving set and even resorting to puncturing the bottle itself.

This of course leads to problems if the bottle is only half used at a time.

Another trick is to insert an 18 gauge needle in the bung to let air in.

The simple answer is that the giving set itself has a plastic plug which can be opened to let air in via a microfilter - problem solved!



## The Blind Man

Two nuns are ordered to paint a room in the convent, with a stern warning from the Mother Superior not to get even a drop of paint on their habits.

After conferring about this, the two nuns decide to lock the door of the room, strip off their habits, and paint naked...

In the middle of the project, there's a knock at the door.

"Who is it?" calls one of the nuns.

"Blind man," replies a voice from the other side of the door.

The two nuns look at each other and shrug, both deciding that no harm can come from letting a blind man into the room. They open the door.

"Very pretty ladies" says the man. "Where do you want the blinds?"



## New Product- Drink-Up

'You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink' so the old saying goes.

That has been very true right up until quite recently when KER have solved the age old problem, which has bothered equine owners for many a long year.

Horses, with their abundance of apocrine sweat glands as opposed to humans who have a preponderance of exocrine sweat glands, do not have the same increased concentration of sodium in the blood when they sweat, hence they do not get the rapid stimulation of thirst reflex that we do.

Therefore it is always a problem getting horses to drink after exercise. Not only after exercise but when travelling there can be a massive problem as horses, being notoriously fussy drinkers, often will not accept water that does not have the same taste as at home.

Water intake is vital for maintaining the health and well-being of all horses. When water intake is less than adequate, horses are at risk of dehydration, particularly if exercising or travelling.

KER Drink-Up™ is the solution patented by KER and has proven to be amazingly effective in getting recalcitrant horses to drink water.

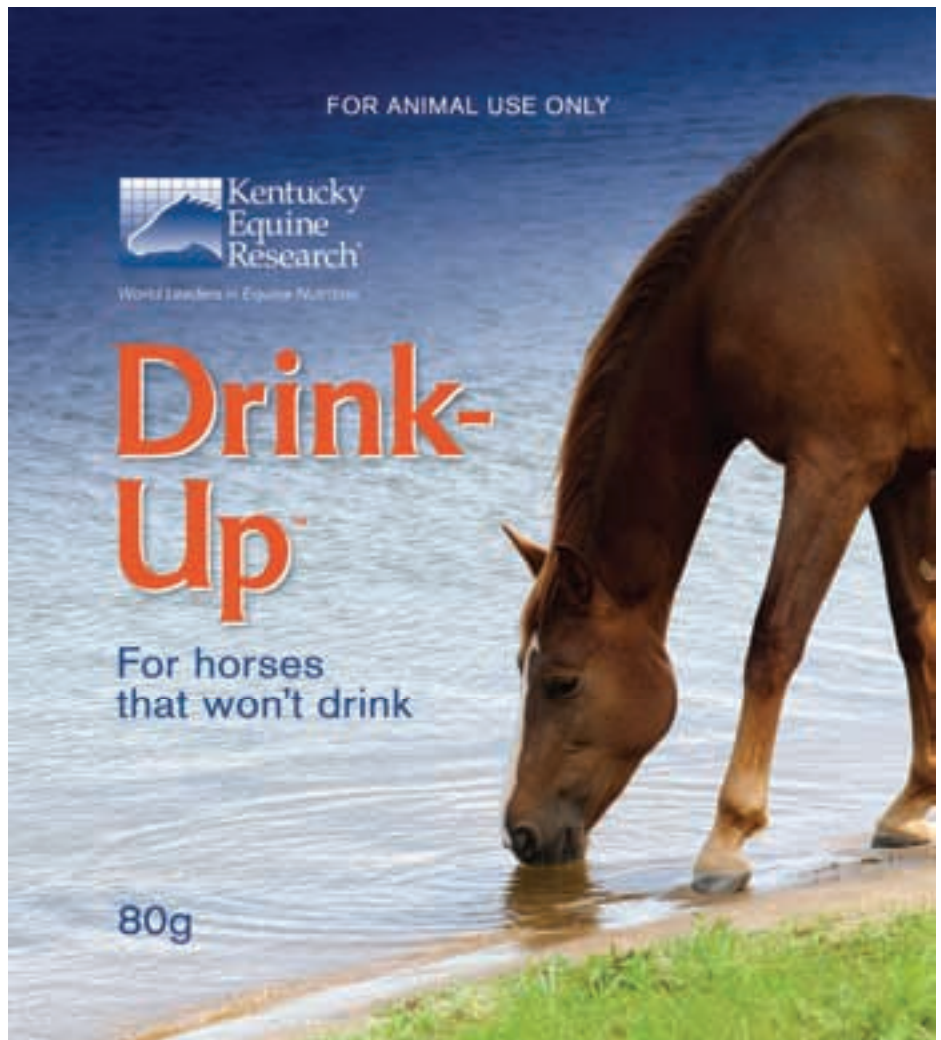
Drink-Up is a scientifically formulated, highly palatable, complex combination of ingredients, which increases a horse's acceptance of water and therefore aids in the prevention of dehydration.

How does Drink-Up work? Drink-Up is a highly palatable blend designed to encourage horses to drink water. Drink-Up is a scientifically formulated blend containing floating, sinking and water flavouring ingredients which when combined encourages horses to drink to the bottom of their bucket!

As well as chasing the floating ingredients, Drink-Up contains KER Restore which helps stimulate the thirst response, encouraging a horse to drink every drop! Research has shown that 90% of horses increased water intake with Drink-Up.

Feeding recommendations: Drink-Up can be used at home, whilst travelling or during competition.

Empty one 80g sachet of Drink-Up into 5 litres of clean, fresh water and stir to enhance flavour. Offer immediately or wait 30 minutes to further enhance flavour.



## Domestic Dispute

A police officer called the station on his radio.

"I have an interesting case here. An old lady shot her husband for

stepping on the floor she just mopped."

"Have you arrested the woman?"

"Not yet. The floor's still wet."

## The Sustainability Of Thoroughbred Racing

A very thought provoking study was published recently on the sustainability of thoroughbred racing. The sad fact is that, globally, thoroughbred racing is on the decline and this really is multifactorial. The New Zealand system is no different with the foal crop diminishing year by year.

Many talk of sustainable growth but there is the concept, which at first glance appears ethereal but in reality is simple common sense, that in a finite world, growth cannot be sustainable. A *status quo* may be sustainable but growth eventually must be unsustainable and hence growth itself leads to unsustainability.

That, of course, is all very well but it does not address the major problem of thoroughbred racing, and horse racing in general, of how to retain relevance into the next century and beyond.

Whilst increasing costs are a factor this is only a small part of the story. Allied to the increasing costs are lower stakes, which is due to reduced betting turnover so there is a real chicken and egg syndrome. It does appear that the downward spiral is reaching critical mass as there are other problems as well, and these have a more pressing effect than sheer economics.

Like everything public opinion can be an overriding factor. It may be fickle at times, and not logical at others, but it is always very strong. The dairy industry has to contend with issues of the environment and animal welfare in the minds of the public, and the equine industry is no different.

What also has changed dramatically in the last few decades is the new technology making it easier for the public to see and be in-

formed. This can be a good thing and, much in the way the advent of side line referees has cleaned up the image of rugby, the excellent coverage of Trackside television has meant some practices, previously undetected, are in the open and no longer deemed acceptable.

Add in zealots, smart phones and social media and there is the makings of a perfect storm of negative publicity. The New Zealand industry did itself little favours a few years back when stringent whipping laws were brought into place before a major meeting ensued at Ellerslie. The big event on the card was won by a horse that was flogged all the way to the line in a flagrant transgression of the new rules. A strong administration would have had, at the very least, an enquiry into the placings and if they had had the courage to disqualify the winner on welfare grounds there would have been not only a benchmark laid down but a massive message to the general public that racing takes animal welfare seriously.

**"Colourful names like elephant juice, blue magic and milk-shaking have the effect of catching public attention."**

However it is not just physical abuse that occupies the public mind where animal welfare is concerned, but the whole racing package.

Jumps racing, in particular, has come under a lot of scrutiny, especially gruelling races with many casualties such as the Grand National at Aintree. This race is not actually representative of jumping in other parts of the world, and has made efforts to improve its reputation, but, thanks to its extreme profile, it has images carried

around the globe. Jumping is now banned in New South Wales and is under severe scrutiny in Victoria.

The issue of drugs is a major one and the effect is twofold. First of all, the obvious insult to the integrity of the sport that an image of performance enhancing drugs cannot be overestimated. Despite the best efforts of integrity units there are always new drugs arising.

Colourful names like elephant juice, blue magic and milk-shaking have the effect of catching public attention. In actual fact, thanks to integrity units, racing is one of the cleanest sports around and definitely appears safer to bet on than cricket, boxing or even athletics. However public perception is hard to shift, just ask the Tour de France!

Modern detection methods mean that anabolic growth promotants can no longer be used in racing animals but, in several areas of the world, they are used to bulk up young horses before sales. Apart from the obvious dishonesty involved there is an image in the public mind of horses being forced to grow beyond their capabilities and being made prone to injury.

While the general populace will admire the courage of an All Black for taking pain killing injections and carrying on playing, they abhor horses being given pain killers in order to race. There is the question of choice for a start and also the fact that the horse does not know when to stop, thus risking severe injury. Some overseas jurisdiction allow forms of medication and this does not help their image.

The rise of so called "organic" farming shows how little the general public understand chemicals and their benefits, hence even mild

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# The Sustainability Of Thoroughbred Racing

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interventions such as manipulating a mare's cycle with pharmaceuticals to ensure pregnancy can be viewed negatively in some quarters.

Add in the fact that many now believe horses are bred for speed at the expense of soundness, not an unjust assumption with the push for horses to race at younger and younger ages, and there is a general air of lack of concern for animal welfare in the racing game. This is certainly reinforced when the New York Times in 2012 reported that 29 horses on average die per year on racetracks in the United States.

What happens to slow horses or those at the end of their careers also tugs at the public's heart-strings. To quote directly for the article 'Finally, as *McManus et al* (2013) found, "the end stage of a racing horse's life is often one of the worst ethical failures in the whole industry", with many ending up in abattoirs, often after long transports, to be killed.'

That sums up the case for the prosecution but what can the industry do in its own defence? As the veterinary industry worldwide has found on the antibiotic issue, merely pointing out that we are not so bad has little effect on a public opinion that has been formed and set by so many outside influences.

Like the veterinary industry, racing has to be bold and innovative in order to be heard (disqualifying that group 1 winner at Ellerslie a few years back would have been just such a laudable action.)

Animal welfare advocates pinpoint a lack of transparency and this must be overcome by data collection (sound familiar?). Innovative moves are not just confined to the veterinary industry but in many sectors of society and racing should not be too proud to look at other organisations for ideas.

One such idea mooted is looking at the burden of proof. In the environmental question the burden of proof was shifted away from the regulators to those seeking economic gains. In sports the argument is that the burden of proof should not be on the regulators or the athletes but on the sponsors so that sponsorship money and the win at all costs mentality are no longer linked.

Another idea is to put an economic cost in racing injuries to improve horse safety, although all horsemen would argue that any injury already involves a severe economic cost and is something to be avoided. This really is typical of a certain political party that tends to have great ideas on paper that do not work in practice.

From here the article starts to wallow in fuzzy concepts but the over-

all message is clear; the racing industry worldwide is in decline (the number of thoroughbred foals born in Germany in 2012 was 900, which they hoped would be an all-time low, but the number dropped below 800 the following year). Simple economics are an issue for some but not really the overriding issue. The big concerns are over animal welfare and, to a lesser extent but still major, integrity.

The racing industry worldwide needs to take some bold innovative steps to get the initiative back but this will take considerable harmonization, tolerance and cooperation. That is the challenge.

In the long term big money races will probably persist on an America's Cup type scenario, as playthings for the mega-rich, but the odds are that the glorious uncertainty of racing, whereby the ordinary rank and file can end up with a top horse, will be long gone; like the dated myth that any person, no matter his financial circumstances can become president of the USA.

Reference: Bergman I. Sustainability, thoroughbred racing and the need for change. *Pferdeheilkunde* 31, 5, 490-498, Oct. 2015. (*Pferdeheilkunde* publishes scientific articles from all fields of equine medicine in German and English language as well as abstracts of the international professional literature).

## Relief

Kenny, who had a little too much to drink, is driving home from the city one night and, of course, his car is weaving all over the road.

A cop pulls him over. 'So,' says the cop to Kenny, 'where have you been?'

'Why, I've been to the pub of course,' slurs Kenny.

'Well,' says the cop, 'it looks like you've had quite a few to drink this evening.'

'I did all right,' Kenny grins.

'Did you know,' says the cop, standing straight, 'that a few intersections back, your wife fell out of your car?'

'Oh, thank heavens,' sighs Kenny, 'for a minute there, I thought I'd gone deaf.'

## CIAs - Where the Problem Lies

The recent unmasking of the worst kept secret in the land, no, not Richie McCaw's retirement but the appearance of antibiotic resistant bacteria in New Zealand poultry, has served to keep animals and antibiotics at the forefront of public consciousness. It does accentuate the weight given to the highly intensive poultry and pig industries but, because of that pressure, those industries overseas have actually been at the forefront of mechanisms to combat the problem.

Like the New Zealand Veterinary profession, they realise that they will not be taken seriously by the general populace unless they front foot the problem from the word go. Getting the message out can be difficult and good science does not always win, especially when other countries pay lip service to the whole problem and carry on using and abusing antibiotics.

A particularly vibrant cry from many in the medical profession is to restrict, or even ban, the use of what are termed 'critically important antibiotics' (CIA) in veterinary medicine.

Some time ago MPI issued sales figures for antibiotics registered for veterinary use in New Zealand. The figures were total sales and there was a large disclaimer as to accuracy and what could be read from them.

Recently the 2013 sales for the EU have been published, followed on by the UK-VARSS (UK veterinary antibiotic resistance and sales surveillance report). A close study of these allows some pretty pertinent assumptions to be made about the use, and misuse of CIA. Comparisons to the NZ situation are also valid.

Like the New Zealand data, these two documents, while much fuller,



also have strong disclaimers. Nevertheless assumptions are made from these data by the authors and they do appear relevant. In the same light other assumptions can be made.

CIA are generally defined as 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins, fluoroquinolones and macrolides, and these are the antibiotics most under fire from the medical profes-

**"Be responsible with antibiotic usage - eat red meat!"**

sion. But how much are they actually used therapeutically by the veterinary profession, and how much are they abused by the farming sector?

When looking at the actual antibiotic classes, in the UK the bulk, around 77%, is made up of tetracyclines, TMPS and  $\beta$  lactams. Macrolides are a significant 11% but fluoroquinolones at 0.7% and 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins a miniscule 0.23%; this is hardly evidence of overuse of CIA. The

emphasis may rightly be on keeping use low, but the profession in the UK seems to be doing its bit.

In the UK data 86% of antibiotic sales are for food producing animals. In addition 63% were in pre-mixes and 26% in oral/water form, which includes tablets. 10% of sales are injections with less than 0.7% intramammary and 0.7% others (aerosols, creams and ear and eye medications).

A bold assumption made in both documents was that the vast majority of injectable antibiotics go to food producing animals and tablets more signify companion animals. A rather safe assumption is that oral powders and oral solutions are indicative of group treatments rather than treatments of individual animals. This is extremely relevant when looking at the differences in fluoroquinolone usage in different countries.

For some reason fluoroquinolones seem to be demonised more than other CIA yet their use in animals, except in some countries, is much lower than the equally important macrolides. So how preva-

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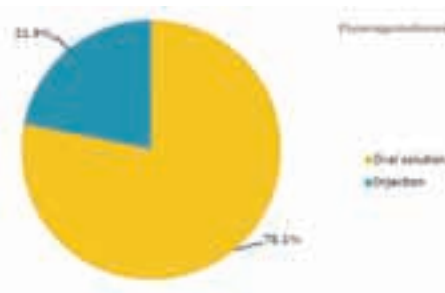
# CIA's - Where the Problem Lies

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lent is the use of fluoroquinolones in the UK and Europe?

It certainly is a regional problem as a map (facing page) of spatial distribution of fluoroquinolone sales indicates. The darker the country on the map the greater the use.

Clearly the main offending countries are in Eastern Europe (those that bothered to put in data) and the Iberian Peninsula.



When we look at the sales of fluoroquinolones, registered for food producing animals, in Europe we see that the biggest percentage (a massive 78.1%) is oral solution, i.e. group therapy. This use is totally banned in our neck of the woods and, in fact, oral enrofloxacin solution, for food animals, was deregistered by the regulatory authorities in the 90s, showing how far ahead of the pack the NZ industry has been.

This is further emphasised when looking at the ratio of fluoroquino-

lone sales in the various countries. It is no great surprise to find that the countries with the greatest overall usage are the countries where the ratio of oral solution to injection is the highest.

In effect there are countries that not only have the highest use, but also the least responsible use, that of treating groups of animals; no surprise there.

Highly intensive pork and poultry production is the biggest problem with the European document actually stating "group medication is mostly used in poultry and pigs and less, for example, in sheep and goats." Nevertheless it is clear some countries have a more *laissez faire* approach than others.

Which takes us to the real nub of the issue. It is not veterinary use or agricultural use per se, that is the issue; it is the type of farming, i.e. pig and poultry production, that causes the most concern because of their intensive nature.

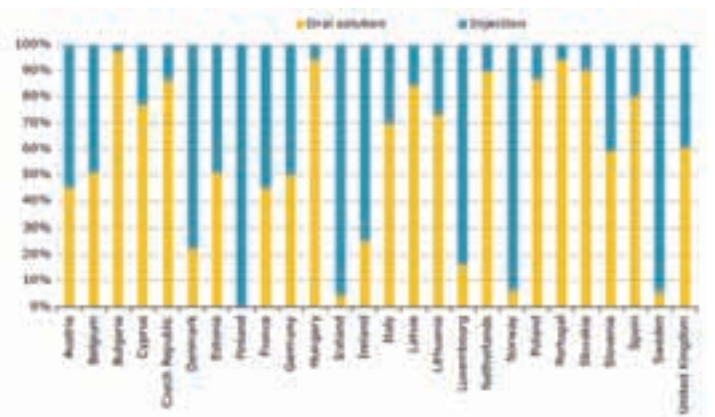
To be fair to the NZ pig and poultry industries they are well aware of the issue, and of public concerns, so have taken responsible atti-

tudes (as stated above). It is their fellow farmers in overseas countries who do the most harm.

In an ideal world oral solutions of fluoroquinolones would be withdrawn from the market, leaving these valuable antibiotics free to do their real work, as important therapeutic tools. Politics in Europe means that area of the world is a long way behind Australasia in responsible use, with areas like Asia toiling in the wake.

New Zealand can be proud of the leadership sectors of the country have shown but must hope that sometime soon bigger trading partners start to see farther than the ends of their noses and pay more than lip service to the issue; or else the decision may be taken out of the veterinary industry's hands.

In the meantime sheep and beef therefore could well take the attitude of, "Be responsible with antibiotic usage – eat red meat!"



## Room 301

Nagy and Tony arrange to meet in Nagy's hotel room. Nagy gives Tony some directions.

"You come to the front door of the hotel, I am in room 301. There is a big panel at the front door. With your elbow, push button 301.

I will buzz you in. Come inside and the elevator is on the right. Get in, and with your elbow, push 3rd Floor.

When you get out, I'm on the left. With your elbow, hit my doorbell. OK?"

"Nagy, that all sounds very easy, but, why am I hitting all these buttons with my elbow?"

"What . . . . . You're coming empty handed?"

**So it is goodbye 2015, welcome 2016, may it be as good a year for all our clients as we expect it to be for us, the happy team. This incorporates not only the rep force but the whole support team, Faris, Dave, Nathan and Rakeesh in the warehouse, sales support Marion and Amelie, the office team of Anne, Andrea, Rachel and Robyn plus the whole Roberts family *et moi*.**



## Genius of Bureaucracy

Once upon a time there was a king who wanted to go fishing.

He called the royal weather forecaster and enquired as to the weather forecast for the next few hours.

The weatherman assured him that there was no chance of rain in the coming days.

So the king went fishing with his wife, the queen. On the way he met a farmer on his donkey. Upon seeing the king the farmer said, "Your Majesty, you should return to the palace at once because in just a short time I expect a huge amount of rain to fall in this area".

The king was polite and considerate, he replied: "I hold the palace meteorologist in high regard. He is an extensively educated and experienced professional. Besides, I pay him very high wages. He gave me a very different forecast. I trust him and I will continue on my way." So he continued on his way.

However, a short time later a torrential rain fell from the sky. The King and Queen were totally soaked and their entourage chuckled upon seeing them in such a shameful condition.

Furious, the king returned to the palace and gave the order to fire

the weatherman at once!

Then he summoned the farmer and offered him the prestigious and high paying role of royal forecaster.

The farmer said, "Your Majesty, I do not know anything about forecasting. I obtain my information from my donkey. If I see my donkey's ears drooping, it means with certainty that it will rain."

So the king hired the donkey.

And so began the practice of hiring asses to work in the government and occupy its highest and most influential positions.