

Regu-mate for the moody mare - an owner's guide

Regu-mate (altrenogest) is a synthetic hormone used to suppress the behavioral signs of heat (also called oestrus or being in season). It is an oil solution for oral use either directly on the mare's tongue or in the feed.

How Regu-mate works

As a mare enters heat and prepares for breeding, her levels of oestrogen rise. After she ovulates, oestrogen drops and is replaced with an increasing amount of progesterone. Roughly 14 to 16 days after ovulation, if the mare is not pregnant, her progesterone levels decline and the cycle starts again. Regu-mate is a synthetic form of progesterone. Within three days of the start of treatment, Regu-mate will effectively suppress oestrus in 95 percent of mares. When given daily for up to 15 consecutive days, it reliably keeps mares from entering oestrus. Once the use of Regu-Mate is discontinued, mares will reliably return to heat within 4 to 5 days and ovulate within 5 to 7 days following the onset of heat. Knowing this, breeding managers use Regu-mate to help facilitate scheduled breeding of multiple mares and maximize the use of a stallion.

In the moody mare, Regu-mate can eliminate hormonal distractions, enabling performance horses to focus more on you and perform more predictably. It cannot, however, improve your mare's performance from what it is normally. Behavioural problems may well recur following cessation of treatment. Administering Regu-mate to your performance mare should not jeopardize her potential as a brood mare.

Strategic use

It is not absolutely necessary to have your mare on Regu-mate for the entire year or even throughout your competitive calendar. Strategic use can reduce the amount and cost of Regu-mate. Once you are comfortable with the time scales and effect of the drug on your individual horse you will be able to formulate a treatment regime. Very often this will involve starting Regu-mate 4 days prior to the show date, continuing treatment for 15 plus days then stopping with the expectation of seeing a heat approximately 4 to 5 days following cessation of the drug.

Dosage and administration

The appropriate dose is 1ml Regumate Equine per 50kg bodyweight (0.044mg altrenogest per kg) per day for 15 consecutive days. This means the average 500kg horse will require 10mls per day. Please ensure that you read the individual administration instructions for the different sized containers. In time it may be possible to taper the dose slightly.

Regu-mate Equine has a product licence for use in horses. It is regarded as a "prohibited substance" by the governing bodies of organisations such as the Jockey Club. This means that any horse must be off the medication for at least eight days before racing. Other organisations, such as the FEI, do permit mares to compete on Regu-mate. An ETUE 2 (declaration for administration of altrenogest (e.g. Regu-mate) to mares competing in FEI competitions) must be completed, signed and approved by the Veterinary Commission/Delegate at the event. Administration of Regu-mate to stallions is however an offence under the FEI EADCM Rules.

Care must be taken when using Regu-mate

Ensure anyone handling the drug reads the data sheet with the medication. Avoid skin contact. Always wear protective gloves when administering Regu-mate. This product is not for use in mares with a previous or current history of uterine inflammation. Do not use in horses intended for human consumption. **Pregnant women, or women who suspect they are pregnant, should not handle this product. Women of child bearing age should exercise extreme caution when handling this product.** Accidental absorption could lead to a disruption of the menstrual cycle or prolongation of pregnancy. Direct contact with the skin should therefore be avoided. Accidental spillage on the skin should be washed off immediately with soap and water.