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## ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES

- How ice can aid healing
- Cold therapy for wellness
- Facts about CBD

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# THE CHILL FACTOR

**Whether treating new trauma, managing healing injuries or simply helping keep hardworking horses sound, cold therapy is a powerful tool.**

*By Heather Smith Thomas with Christine Barakat*

It sounds almost too good to be true, like the subject of a pitch from an old-timey snake-oil salesman: an easy-to-use, one-step, drug-free therapy that can minimize the effects of a recent musculoskeletal trauma and accelerate recovery from old injuries. And you'd be right to raise an eyebrow, thinking, "That cannot possibly exist." But it does, and it really is that good.

Cryotherapy—or, more simply, cold therapy—is one of the most effective methods for alleviating soft tissue-related aches and pains of hardworking horses. Whether it takes the form of ice, frigid water or one of a growing number of commercial "chill-down" products, cold therapy can aid the healing of musculoskeletal injuries both new and old, as well as help prevent them.

Yet this powerful technique is, generally speaking, underutilized by horsemen. "Cold therapy isn't applied as often as it could be but is very useful," says Bruce Connally, DVM, a veterinarian in Berthoud, Colorado. "It's been proven in both horses and in humans to work very well."

If you'd like to try using cold therapy on your horse, you can start today. Right now, even. Simplicity is a big part of its appeal: Turn on the hose, empty an ice tray and you're ready to go. But this form of therapy will be more effective if you understand something about the physiological changes set in motion when cold meets limb. Here's what you need to know.

## COLD AS A FIRST AID

The benefits of cold therapy in treating acute injuries will be familiar to anyone who has plopped an ice pack on a newly twisted ankle. Something similar happens when you use ice to ease the trauma of a horse who knocks his fetlock on a log or gets nailed on the hindquarters by a kicking pasturemate. For starters, cold has an analgesic effect, which means it more or less numbs tissues that it touches. This makes the

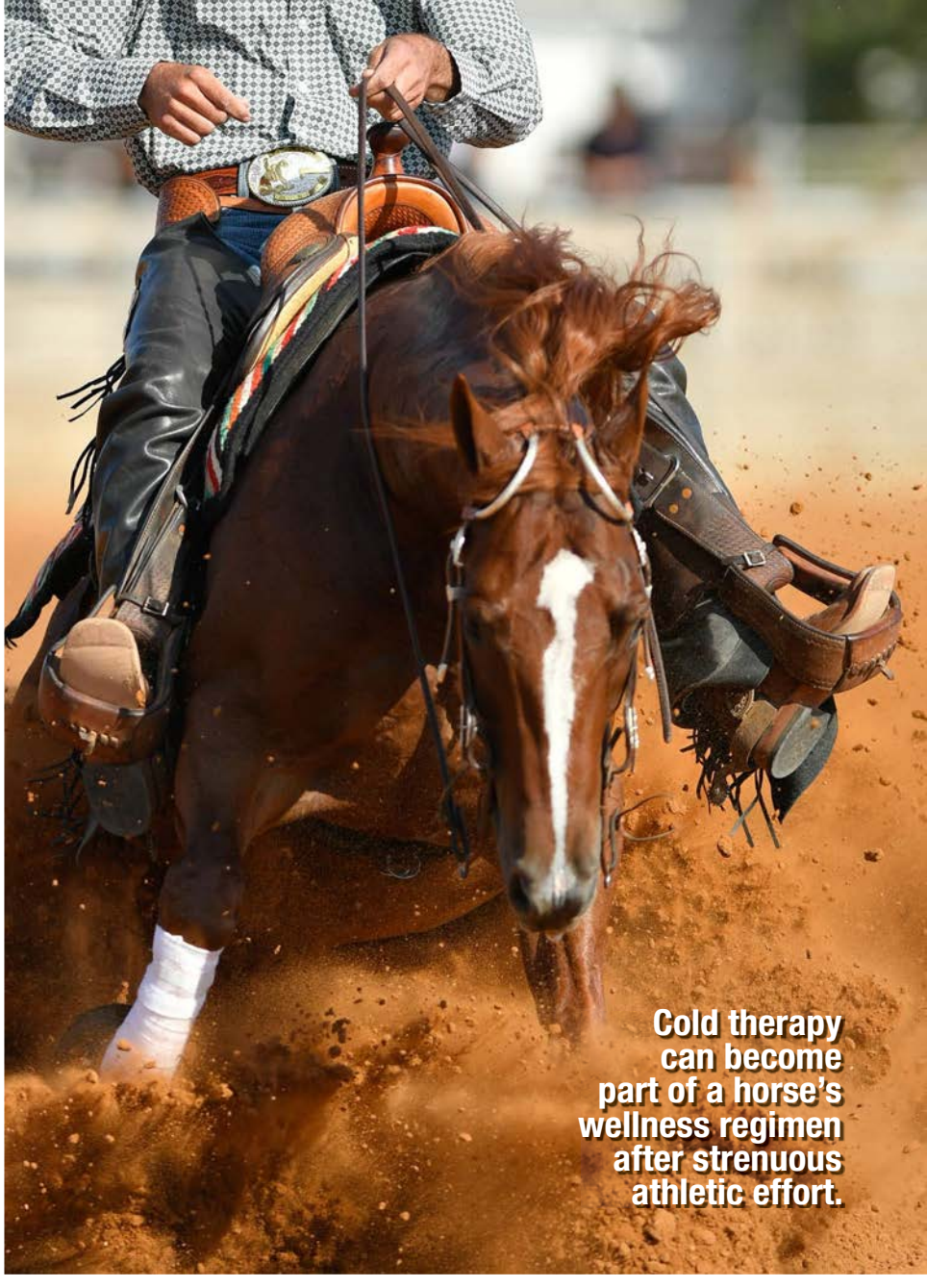
TOP: JANIS TREMPER LEFT: GETTY IMAGES

horse feel better almost immediately.

Meanwhile, another important physiological process is triggered by the cold. When a horse knocks a knee, pulls a tendon or otherwise injures himself, damaged blood vessels in the affected area begin to leak fluid into the surrounding tissues. This sets off an inflammatory cascade that we see as swelling and the horse feels as pain. Left alone, this leaking will stop naturally in about 12 to 36 hours, and the body's natural "cleanup" effort will begin as part of the healing process. Dramatically cooling tissues at a new injury site, however, causes the blood vessels to constrict, limiting the leakage that leads to inflammation. This means there is less for the body to clean up later, shortening total healing time.

"The benefits of cold in the acute stage [first two to three days after the injury] are great," says Kent Allen, DVM, a sport horse veterinarian in Middleburg, Virginia. "In those first days the cold therapy will slow blood flow, reduce pain perception and limit the amount of inflammatory mediators being released into the area. Thus it lowers cell metabolism, muscle contractility, nerve conduction, and significantly reduces the inflammatory response."

**Application tip:** In the case of acute injuries, time is of the essence. The moment you notice a lump or a limp, apply cold to the area, but keep an eye on your watch. "You only need to do it for about 20 or 30 minutes at a time," says Connally. "You don't have to do it continually." In fact, continual cold can damage tissues, and you'll want to allow for at least 30 minutes between treatments. For maximum effect, follow a 20-minutes-on, 30-minutes-off schedule as closely as you can for the first 36 hours after an injury.



Cold therapy can become part of a horse's wellness regimen after strenuous athletic effort.

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## **COLD** FOR **OLDER** INJURIES

Even after the acute phase of an injury has passed, cold therapy can still aid in recovery. "Another use of cold therapy, which many people tend to forget, is during rehabilitation," says Katie Seabaugh, DVM, of the University of Georgia and diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation. "After the injury is healing, it is helpful to incorporate cold therapy into a recovery plan."

Just as in application to an acute injury, the benefits of cold therapy in rehabilitation hinge on its vasoconstrictive effects. But when it's applied to older injuries there's a twist.

In treating acute injuries, the constriction of blood vessels by cold limits leakage and damage in tissues. In a rehabilitating horse, however, the leakage has stopped and it's the return of blood to the area after the cold is removed that is most helpful. The renewed circulation brings a "cleanup crew" of white blood cells and natural chemicals that destroy dead cells and clean up physiological debris. This cooling/warming cycle created by intervals of icing also generates a

"pumping" action in the tissues that can encourage and speed healing.

Even after healing is well underway and swelling has dissipated, it's often wise to continue cold therapy as the horse resumes his normal regimen."If the horse has been off work for a long time during recovery, perhaps from a tendon injury, and is just starting exercise again, it is beneficial to apply cold therapy when that injured area is put back into work," says Seabaugh. "This can help minimize possible stress and inflammation as you get the newly healed tissues working again."

**Application tip:** During the rehabilitation phase of an injury, cold therapy doesn't need to be applied as frequently as in the acute phase. One 20-minute session of icing after exercise will usually be adequate.

## **COLD** FOR **FASTER** ATHLETIC RECOVERY

Cold therapy can also become part of a horse's wellness regimen after strenuous athletic effort. When a horse is working hard, capillaries that serve his muscles, tendons and ligaments expand to bring in needed blood. When work stops, however, that excess flow can persist and the now-unneeded fluid can bring with it enzymes associated with inflammation. As these fluids pool in the area, they make the horse sore and stretch tissues, which can lead to stocking up both in the short and long term. You can prevent most of this with cold therapy, which will help close up those vessels, restoring post-workout circulatory conditions quickly.

The effectiveness of post-workout cold therapy to hasten recovery is well documented in human athletes. "One article, for instance, showed the effectiveness of cold-water immersion on post-match recovery in elite football players," says Seabaugh. "The players participated in a game and then completed performance tests 24 to 48 hours after the game, after being randomly assigned to different groups. One group utilized passive recovery, another utilized cold-therapy recovery, and another used contrast-water therapy [hot and cold]. The only group that showed a significant beneficial effect was the group that utilized cold-water immersion. Those athletes came back to peak performance faster and had less pain and fatigue after the match. Cold-water immersion helped them get back to desired performance levels quicker."

After-activity icing has also been shown to help with the soreness that can accompany athletic efforts. "Another study looked at delayed-onset muscle soreness in humans, which is the stiffness/soreness you tend to get two days after the event," says Seabaugh. "The cold water immersion reduced this delayed-onset muscle soreness after exercise."

It's no surprise that many post-game television interviews are conducted with athletes immersed in tubs of ice, but it's still not a particularly common practice for horses outside of the racing world (see "A Time-Tested Technique," page 48).

"Human athletes often use ice packs taped to their shoulders or use an ice bath after a performance," says Seabaugh. "In racing, however, and in some performance disciplines, we see horses after a race or a strenuous workout standing in buckets of ice water or ice boots up to their elbows or past the hocks.

**If an ice bucket won't work for your horse, there are other options: "Some horses do better with commercial ice boots or cold-water soaking boots you can strap on the lower leg, since they can move around while wearing them," says Kent Allen, DVM.**

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

These methods are being utilized by some parts of the horse industry, but there is not a lot of research on this. As we start to pay more attention to our equine athletes, however, beyond just racehorses, we will find there are benefits."

**Application tip:** Keep it simple when incorporating cold therapy into your post-workout care routine. After the horse has been walked until his respiration rate has returned to normal, apply whichever cooling method you choose to his limbs for about 20 to 30 minutes. There's no need to repeat the process if you're simply helping him recover as opposed to treating an identified injury.

"You don't get any additional benefit if you use cold therapy longer than about 30 or 40 minutes because after that you start getting the vasodilation effect," says Allen. "Standing a horse in a bucket of ice all day doesn't provide any more benefit. Using the cold too long is actually counterproductive."

## COLD THERAPY METHODS

Regardless of why you are using cold therapy, your options for applying it are the same. From the simple to the high tech, all techniques have the same ultimate goal: to lower the temperature of targeted tissues. "Our target temperature within the tissues should be somewhere between 10 and 15 degrees Celsius, which is about 50 to 59 degrees Fahrenheit," says Seabaugh.

The simplest and most common form of cold therapy is hosing—running a stream of cold water directly over the area. This, however, isn't likely to lower tissue temperatures to the desired range. "[Hosing] is the most popular method, and your veterinarian may tell you to cold hose an injury or a limb for 15 to 30 minutes," says Seabaugh. "This is better than nothing, but it typically does not achieve cool enough temperatures needed for maximum benefit."

**The simplest and most common form of cold therapy is hosing—running a stream of cold water directly over the area. This, however, isn't likely to lower tissue temperatures to the desired range.**

A bucket of water supplemented with ice will be cold enough for effective therapy, if you can convince the horse to stand in it. (You may hear advice to add rock salt to the mix to further lower the temperature of the ice bath, but that can make the mixture too cold, damaging tissues. Stick to straight ice and refresh it as necessary.) It may help to use a large muck bucket with a towel placed on the bottom to provide more secure footing for the horse. For the best results, try placing the horse's foot in the bucket, then fill it with water to just above the injured area, then add the ice.

If an ice bucket won't work for your horse, try a more "targeted" approach. "Some horses do better with commercial ice boots or cold-water soaking boots you can strap on the lower leg, since they can move around while wearing them," says Allen. "Boots with pockets you can put ice into are also handy and fairly comfortable for the horse. There is usually something between the ice and the horse's skin. The cold seeps through, but it doesn't give the horse such an initial cold shock like putting the foot into an ice slurry."

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Cold packs can work, even if they are unconventional. "I have one client who keeps a bunch of bags of frozen cranberries in her freezer," says Allen. "Whenever she has a situation where a horse needs an ice pack, she just tapes these on. They stay frozen/cold for about 20 to 30 minutes, which is as long as you would need an ice pack. Then she re-freezes them for next time."

"Human athletes often take a frozen ice cup and massage the injured area," says Seabaugh. "It is certainly useful in humans, but it may be more difficult to obtain results in horses with their thicker muscles. Ice packs over a certain area that gets sore after performance might be useful, however."

If you'll be using cold therapy often or want to be more certain that you'll cool the target area enough, it might make sense to invest in one of the higher-tech systems for cooling limbs, such as saltwater "spas" and compression boots with continuously circulating fluids that cool the limb without getting it wet. "Many of the three-day-event barns and some of the major training facilities have equipment like this to help with the recovery of equine athletes," says Seabaugh. Horses typically become acclimated to their use and will stand quietly for, and even appear to enjoy, regular treatments.

For better or worse, most of us are always ready to embrace new methods of caring for our horses. We aren't daunted by innovative or complex techniques so long as there is the promise that they will benefit our horses. Sometimes, however, simple is good. And cold therapy, when applied properly, is just that—a good, simple way to help keep horses sound, comfortable and healthy.

## A **TIME-TESTED** TECHNIQUE

DUSTY PERIN

In horse racing, a sport known for its embrace of tradition, icing horses' legs has long been one of the more beneficial customs. "When I was training horses in the 1960s and 1970s everyone had horses lined up, standing in ice tubs," says Bill Casner, who has been involved with racing as a trainer, owner (2010 Derby Winner Super Saver was one of his) and executive his entire life. "One of the first things we did was get them accustomed to standing there with their feet in the tubs. It's labor intensive to train them to the ice tubs. Those young horses would turn over the tubs, flood the stalls, etc., but once you get them trained to it they jump right in and stay there. It probably feels good," he says.

Casner says that cold therapy fell out of favor a bit when medications came along. "Everyone thought phenylbutazone was the answer to everything," he says. "There are times that we do use it as a tool but, like every other drug, it has side effects, and the list of side effects for phenylbutazone is long. Too many horsemen are convinced that drugs are the answer. If those riders would ice their horses before and after they perform, they'd run great and wouldn't have any of the adverse side effects like they might have with drugs."

Rather than rely on medications, Casner says he never abandoned cooling therapy. "Cold therapy is a wonderful tool," he says. "We employ this method on our own horses for reducing swelling and inflammation; we use very little bute, and never use it more than two days in a row. We use cold therapy in training and as therapy after the horses run. There are no detrimental effects, like you'd have with drugs."

Casner, who also has experience with roping horses, encourages owners of all types of athletic horses to embrace icing and advises applying a bit of ingenuity when necessary to fit it into a busy competition schedule: "A person could probably figure out a way to use ice boots or cold water applications while they were rolling down the road hauling the horse to the next event," he says.

SHUTTERSTOCK

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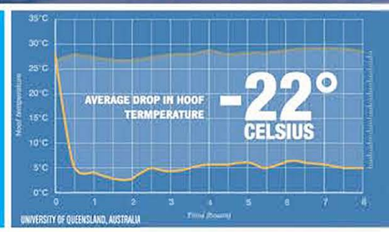


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## YOUR HORSE IS AN ATHLETE AND SOFT RIDE TREATS THEM LIKE ONE.

# CBD, TBD

The 2018 Farm Bill opened the legal gate on a robust national hemp industry, with **CBD products** galore for humans and horses alike emerging shortly thereafter. Hemp-derived products may seem like an answer to your rope horse's joints' prayers, but questions remain: What are these products? Can we use them? How should we use them? And, do we want to use them?

*By G.R. Schiavino*

TRJ FILE PHOTO

On December 20, 2018, the president put his signature on the 2018 Farm Bill, thereby legalizing hemp in the United States. Sort of.

The ins and outs of the new, legal hemp industry are more contorted than a rope with a bad backswing and a twisted honda, but that hasn't prohibited a rapid emergence of countless new products for humans and horses alike. Particularly in cannabis-friendly states and across social media, CBD is being promoted as what can look like an end-all-be-all, magical, cure-all elixir, and the answer to everything from headaches to cancer, and to horses whose aches and anxieties just might be the death of them.

But, what is CBD really? Or, for that matter, what is cannabis and what is hemp? Can we get high from it? Is it toxic to our animals? How should we use it? And, finally, which products can we trust?

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# BACK TO **BASICS**

Hemp has a fascinating history that begins as one of the world's first agricultural crops. Without going on too much of a deep dive, a few hemp history highlights include its use on our battleships from the time of colonial Jamestown through WWII; Henry Ford building a car out of hemp in 1942, the same year the U.S. government launched its "Hemp for Victory" campaign that urged farmers to grow the crop for the war effort; and, just this year, Porsche revisiting Ford's endeavor with its $175,000 race car that has replaced the carbon fiber with hemp.

So, if hemp's so industrious (some sources say it has more than 50,000 uses), why are we just hearing about it? Short answer: Politics (a topic we won't be covering here). Second short answer: Misinformation and murky definitions that persist even today.

Hemp ran into trouble with the 1937 Marijuana Tax Act, which placed a collapse-inducing tax on all cannabis sales. Both marijuana and hemp come from cannabis sativa, though there are different types of cannabis that marijuana can come from. All hemp, which is often referred to as a cousin of marijuana, however, comes only from cannabis sativa. So, since 1937, hemp and marijuana have been lumped together under the cannabis umbrella.

Marijuana is potent in THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) the psychoactive component from which people get high. Hemp, on the other hand, produces an abundance of CBD (cannabidiol), which cannot get you high. Both plants can produce both THC and CBD, but for the plant to be defined legally as hemp (and therefore legal according to the 2018 Farm Bill), it has to contain less than 0.3% of THC.

This small amount is what's referred to as a "trace amount." It cannot get you high, but it will be evident in a blood sample. For young ropers, in particular, who may be playing sports for high school or college, for instance, this is an important detail because there is no one policy that covers each of the different

## History of CBD

**1839**
Irish physician William O'Shaugnessy published a study of the medical effects of cannabis, particularly **as an anesthetic.**

**1940**
**Cannabidiol (CBD),** a cannabinoid found in cannabis, is discovered by American chemist Roger Adams.

**1978**
New Mexico legally recognizes the medicinal values of cannabis with the passage of the **Controlled Substance Therapeutic Research Act.**

**1980**
Israeli Dr. Raphael Mechoulam publishes a study on the positive effects of **treating epileptic patients with CBD.**

**1988**
Researchers discover **cannabinoid receptors** in the brain of a rat.

**1995**
Cannabinoid receptors are discovered in humans, leading to the realization of the **Endocannabinoid System (ECS).**

**2004**
It is discovered that human illnesses like **migraines, fibromyalgia, IBS** and others appear to be related to endocannabinoid deficiencies (suggesting that those illnesses may be treated with cannabinoids).

**2009**
Cannabinoids are discovered to be effective as **anti-inflammatories.**

**2017**
U.S. Hemp-derived CBD Market = **$190 million**; CBD Pet Supply Market = $13 million.

**2018**
• **U.S. Food and Drug Administration approves** Epidiolex, a CBD-based pharmaceutical that treats seizures in Dravet Syndrome and Lennox-Gastaut Syndrome.

• *Frontiers in Veterinary Science* publishes a study by Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine showing CBD treatment in dogs resulted in **decreased pain** and increased activity with owners reporting no side effects.

• CBD products begin hitting the shelves of major retailers like **CVS, 7-Eleven and Walgreens** in industry-friendly markets.

**2019**
The FDA announces that it is preparing to construct an internal agency to regulate CBD under the **Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act and Public Health Service Act.**

organizations, and any evidence of THC in the bloodstream can carry very real consequences for an athlete.

Similarly, for those whose horses compete in various arenas governed by different associations, it is worth reaching out to each of those associations for official language regarding this detail. Professional team ropers should know that "the use of CBD Oil on all horses and livestock used for contest purposes is prohibited by the PRCA at all sanctioned rodeos and will remain prohibited until further research becomes available." The official statement from the organization goes on to clarify that "any use of CBD sponsor patches is prohibited at all PRCA-sanctioned rodeos."

Of course, the U.S. hemp industry is estimated to be a $1.4 billion market this year, and it would be prudent to expect that regulations at all levels of government (from sporting leagues and associations to state governments and federal policy) may be seemingly fluid for the next few years.

Not to mention, even though the federal government signed off on U.S. hemp cultivation, what it actually did was invite the states to participate in a legal, federal hemp program. At press time, there were nine states (and Washington, D.C.) not participating in the program and which, therefore, still consider hemp to be illegal. As a result, folks crossing state lines often don't realize that the rules and regulations are so wildly inconsistent and very much in their infancy.

**"The use of CBD Oil on all horses and livestock used for contest purposes is prohibited by the PRCA at all sanctioned rodeos and will remain prohibited until further research becomes available."**
*— PRCA spokesperson*

## THE **SCIENCE** OF IT

2019 marks the 180th anniversary of a published study on the medicinal use of cannabis in 1839. The knowledge didn't disappear—as evidenced by New Mexico's 1978 Controlled Substances Therapeutic Research Act—but it was largely ignored—as evidenced by the breakthrough research conducted by Dr. Raphael Mechoulam in 1980 in which seven-out-of-eight epileptic patients saw transformative results from their CBD treatments.

Research then focused on understanding how cannabis interacted with the body. By 1995, it was discovered that mammals, including humans, are equipped with an Endocannabinoid System (ECS), which regulates bodily functions including pain, sleep and appetite, for example. The ECS creates cannabinoids and has receptors throughout the body—in the skin, the brain, the nervous system, the bone, etc. Uniquely, the cannabis plant also produces cannabinoids (CBD and THC being the best known of the 113 known cannabinoids), which fit into the ECS receptors like a key in a lock. Therefore, if there is an imbalance or deficiency in the ECS, it may be beneficial to supplement the system with cannabinoids like CBD from hemp.

Despite the long history cannabis has in the research lab, in truth, coming by legitimate, scientific research has been an upward battle because of its federal classification as a Schedule I drug. With the legal separation of hemp from its cannabis cousin, however, that is changing, and many veterinarians are eager to see what the plant can offer their four-legged patients, pending more peer-reviewed research.

Until then, there is no short supply of anecdotal claims about what CBD can and has done for ourselves and our animals. Often, an owner seeking results for one ailment will notice a positive change in another aspect of their animal's health and will become an advocate for the product, making claims of "wonder drug" status. The

## THE HISTORY OF HEMP

**8000 B.C.**
Traces of hemp found in what is now **China and Taiwan**. Hemp cords were used in pottery, and hemp seed and oil were used as food, suggesting that hemp was among the first agricultural crops.

**1616**
England's first American settlement, **Jamestown,** grows hemp to manufacture rope, sails and clothing.

**1916**
**USDA** publishes research that shows one acre of hemp can produce four times as much paper as one acre of trees.

**1937**
**The Marijuana Tax Act** places an (ultimately) industry-collapsing tax on cannabis sales, including hemp.

**1938**
25,000 uses for hemp published by **Popular Mechanics.**


**1942**
Because hemp fiber is stronger than steel, **Henry Ford** builds a car out of it.

The **"Hemp for Victory" campaign** is launched by the USDA to support the war effort, leading to 150,000 acres of hemp production.

PHOTOS: AGE FOTOSTOCK

hype generally lends itself to two reactions: One of enthusiasm with an elevated expectation of a product's abilities, and one of skepticism, no thanks to the endless marketing we encounter daily.

In reality, CBD products do have the potential to support multiple maladies because of the nature of the ECS, but it is important to remember that no two animals possess the same ECS, meaning each will have its own unique experience with the product. Also, though largely not yet proven in animals (perhaps with the exception of rats and mice), studies abound that document the efficacy of CBD in the management of inflammation, seizures and anxiety, and demonstrate that it can be effective in treating chronic pain.

HempMy Pet, of Colorado, for instance, is on the verge of publishing the positive results of their study with Colorado State University College of Veterinary Medicine and the Downing Center for Pain Management on the efficacy of their canine product in the treatment of dogs with chronic pain. CSU and Cornell universities have already published other independent canine CBD findings, too, but for the time being, equine-focused research is solely the result of companies like HempMy Pet, with equine CBD products driving the demand for science. Kahm CBD—a Nevada-based company—has reportedly commenced researching the impact of its pellets on horses with severe arthritis and navicular and anticipates the results will be published by their partner university at the end of the summer. Similarly, Colorado's VetCS has been testing bloodwork at another university lab to determine the half-life of CBD in horses.

"Half-life is the peak of the most effective window," explained Trish Wilhelm, CVT, a certified veterinary cannabis counselor who co-owns VetCS with Chelsea Luedke, DVM. "Right now, it is papered and peer-reviewed that dogs have a four-hour half-life of CBD proven in their systems, so, the first four hours is when it's the most effective, but it stays in the system the full eight hours. With horses, however, we're finding in our own studies that horses are actually double that. Their half-life is actually around eight hours. That's why, for horses, we, as a company, only feel the need to dose once a day."

**This article was originally published in the July 2019 issue of *TRJ*.**

## BEST **PRACTICES**

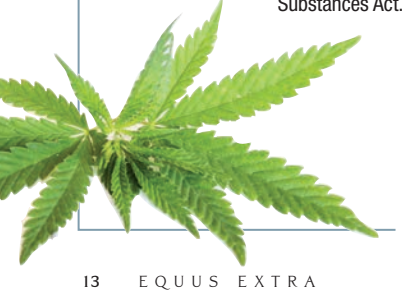
Dosing can cause a bit of confusion for a horse owner. Recommended amounts vary according to companies, as do intervals. The reason for this, again, is because there aren't any official, peer-reviewed studies to lean on. For this reason, Wilhelm recommends the motto "Low and Slow." Begin with a low dose and increase the dose slowly until you are able to recognize improvements. Give your horse up to 48 hours before deciding the amount you've dosed was negligible.

With that advice, however, also comes the assertion that owners should absolutely consult their veterinarians to design a whole-systems treatment plan. Vets know from treating dogs that CBD can interact with drugs the dog is already on.

"We do know, specifically, that CBD is metabolized through the P450 enzymes in the liver," Wilhelm said. "So any concurrent medications these animals are on that might be metabolized through the liver, it has the potential to actually accentuate that circulation of the other drug through the system and heighten that experience."

To add to what you need to know, different types of products may be more effective in attaining different goals.

## THE HISTORY OF HEMP



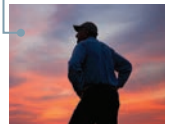
**1957**
**The United States** plants its last commercial hemp fields.

**1970**
**Cannabis, including hemp,** is classified as a Schedule I drug under the Controlled Substances Act.

**1998**
Food-grade **hemp seed and oils** are okayed for U.S. import.

**2007**
Two **North Dakota** farmers are granted the first hemp licenses in 50 years.

**2014**
**The Farm Bill** allows for pilot hemp programs through state and university research institutions. Oregon, Kentucky, Colorado, and North Carolina seize the opportunity.



**2018**
**The Farm Bill** removes hemp from the Controlled Substances Act and allows each state to apply for its own state and tribal hemp cultivation regulations. The bill also allows for the transportation of hemp across state lines. To date, only nine states and Washington, D.C. have not created programs.

**2019**
**Porsche** builds and markets a new twist on the Cayman GT4 race car, which replaces carbon fiber with hemp, and retails for $150,000–$175,000.

## BUYER **BEWARE!**

Until regulatory systems catch up to market demands, the consumer must accept the burden of making good purchasing decisions, particularly when buying CBD with animal care in mind. Here are some recommended purchasing practices:

**Get on the phone.** A seller who is not available to answer your questions is a red flag.

**Ask questions.**

• Where does the product come from? If the retailer or the manufacturer cannot say, specifically, where their product was sourced, this is a red flag. Hint: Stick with products from U.S. farms.

• Was this product lab-tested, and by which lab? Many sellers offer Certificates of Authenticity (COAs) right on the webpage with the product being sold. This is a great starting point, but COAs can be very difficult to read and some, unfortunately, are manufactured to only look legitimate. **HINTS:** Products need to be tested per batch as contents can vary batch to batch. Batches should be tested for potency and content, including heavy metals. Testing conducted by ISO-certified labs can ensure consistency and best practices. Sellers should be available to walk you through these documents.

• Is the CBD content clearly labeled? **HINTS:** If the product only lists the milliliters (ml) in the product, they're excluding the CBD content (mg) and may be selling a product containing an ineffectual amount of CBD. Also, labels are not regulated, so check COAs to confirm CBD potency.

**DO NOT** buy on Amazon. Amazon does not sell CBD products. They are selling hemp products, which (though beneficial in many ways) contain no hemp extract with CBD.

**DO** work with your veterinarian. **HINT:** Though safe, CBD products can amplify the effects of other drugs being taken concurrently. But! Depending on the state in which they practice, some vets may not be legally allowed to discuss CBD treatments and, in all states, veterinarians operate under federal guidelines, which—for the moment—may hinder their ability to discuss options openly.

Without making things overwhelmingly complicated, hemp-derived CBD products are available to your horse in different formulations in tinctures, pastes, pellets and powders. Pastes and tinctures, for instance, can offer the convenience of being able to dose anywhere, anytime, and may be more suitable for treating time-sensitive issues (think, for example, a horse that's too anxious to load). Pellets and powders, on the other hand, make for great daily dosing regimens, and may be more effective for long-term care, like an older horse with arthritis may require. Consider the needs of your horse and your goals when looking for a product, then start asking questions.

It is important to understand, however, that your vet may feel limited in how much he or she can share with you regarding the use of cannabis with your animal. Remember, in some states hemp remains illegal. Also, the FDA does not recognize CBD as medicinal and, because your veterinarian is licensed to prescribe drugs approved by the FDA, suggesting the use of CBD could be interpreted as a violation of his or her license. Still, your vet knows and understands your animal's whole health history, so, at the very least, start the conversation there.

If your vet isn't in a position to help or you simply want to explore further, know that there are consultation services available with certified veterinary cannabis counselors, like Wilhelm. Veterinary Cannabis is located in Colorado and offers resources and consultations for animal owners, veterinary practitioners, and budding cannabis business operators alike. Founded by Casara Andre, DVM, the business offers a team of industry experts that provides scientific and practical information to the whole community.

### GET INFORMED

- **NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD & AGRICULTURE nifa.usda.gov/industrial-hemp**
- **NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES ncsl.org ("State Industrial Hemp Statutes")**
- **PROJECT CDB projectcbd.org**

## CLEAR **AS MUD**

There is much to consider when contemplating the use of hemp-derived CBD equine products and, for the time being, nothing has been proven right or wrong. If wading through all the information feels the same as clawing out of a muddy roping box after a Wyoming hail storm, step back and start broad.

Does my horse have a need for it? Is it legal where I live? Can I get to where I'm going without crossing into a state where it's illegal? Is it allowed by my association?

Then, approach the specifics: What are the veterinary recommendations for my horse? What kind of product would serve my horse best? How many milligrams should I dose to start?

Finally, and just as vital, get on the phone. Talk to the retailers and manufacturers and let them walk you through their products, farming practices, lab test results and research. Ask questions, whether they're relevant to the product or not.

Despite the Wild West nature of the industry right now, it's not difficult to identify the companies who have a passion for their product and, perhaps more importantly, a deep knowledge of the industry as a whole.

At that point, there's only one choice that matters: Do I want to or don't I? And there is no wrong answer to that question.

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