

S&A



MERCK
Animal Health

CASE STUDY

The role of PR to keep a brand relevant and top-of-mind through the years

A marathon, not a sprint

Public relations rarely is about a big “news” story. And few well-established animal health brands have the luxury of a steady news cycle. It’s more about the continuous drumbeat of information to foster and build connections between a brand and its audiences over time. A marathon, not a sprint.

The challenge for many animal health companies is maintaining relevance and a top-of-mind presence not only with the media, but also customers – particularly in the absence of frequent newsworthy developments. The equine division of Merck Animal Health was no different.

Overcoming this challenge relies on a robust PR-driven content strategy grounded in accessible subject-matter expertise, and a healthy dose of creativity.



Photo credit: Thowra_uk - originally posted to Flickr as Blenheim Horse Trials 1.

Reduce, reuse, recycle.

A single piece of content can – and should – be repurposed in multiple ways for brand consistency.

Merck Animal Health Flu Strains Questions and Answers

PRESTIGE[®]
The Next Generation of FLU Protection

Q Why did Merck Animal Health choose the Florida '13 strain for updated research?
A: Florida '13 represents a common, clinically significant strain of equine influenza that was responsible for a large influenza outbreak in well-traveled horses. In February 2013, the annual Ocala horse show in the Sun Belt (FTS) international event experienced a large outbreak of equine herpesvirus type 1 and equine influenza that required hospitalization of horses. The highly contagious disease of influenza that required hospitalization was ultimately isolated and identified as Florida '13 through the Merck Animal Health Respiratory Disease Reference Program, and is a core part of our full line of equine influenza vaccines.

Q Which Merck Animal Health vaccines contain updated influenza strains?
A: All Merck Animal Health Prestige[®] influenza-containing IML-dose vaccines will include the updated influenza strains.

Q Are the '14/15 influenza-containing Merck Animal Health vaccines still protected?
A: Yes, the existing influenza-containing IML-dose vaccines are still protected and continue to demonstrate good protection. Every existing and new Merck Animal Health vaccine is backed by our Equine Vaccine Performance Guarantee.

Q How vaccinated with an existing Merck Animal Health influenza vaccine? Do I need to booster my horse to ensure adequate protection?
A: If you are vaccinated with class 2 protection, it may be beneficial to horses with the new influenza-containing vaccine. Otherwise, horses whose vaccine is not compromised.

Q Are certain horses more susceptible to equine influenza than others?
A: Yes, horses that travel are particularly susceptible to influenza. It is also true that immune system may be compromised due to the stress of travel, as well as the increased exposure to other horses and environments. Outbreaks of influenza tend to frequently occur when susceptible horses are transported to new areas, often in close quarters. In addition, horses that rarely travel should also be vaccinated against influenza if they are exposed to traveling horses.

Q What influenza strains are included in Merck Animal Health's Prerige vaccine?
A: Merck Animal Health influenza-containing IML-dose vaccines include Florida '13, the updated '13 and Kentucky '10 strains. Florida '13 and Kentucky '10 and new strains that were added to the existing Kentucky '10 strain. With these strains, Merck Animal Health is providing protection against currently circulating equine influenza strains, as recommended by the OIE.

Q How have there been any class 2 equine influenza outbreaks in the U.S.?
A: The '13 strain has been reported worldwide of equine influenza from class 2 infected horses in the U.S., we suspect it may just be a matter of time as we see more international movement in our equine populations.

Merck Animal Health Equine Respiratory Update

Getting to Know the "Other" Herpesviruses

Study Results and Observations

Key Findings:

- Equine herpesvirus type 1 (EHV-1) is the most common herpesvirus found in horses.
- EHV-1 is responsible for a wide range of clinical signs, including respiratory disease, neurological signs, and abortion in pregnant mares.
- EHV-1 is highly contagious and can be spread through direct contact, respiratory secretions, and fomites.
- EHV-1 infection is often asymptomatic, but can cause severe disease in some horses.
- EHV-1 infection is a leading cause of respiratory disease in horses.

Key Takeaways:

- EHV-1 is a common and highly contagious virus.
- EHV-1 infection can cause a wide range of clinical signs.
- EHV-1 infection is often asymptomatic, but can cause severe disease.
- EHV-1 infection is a leading cause of respiratory disease.

PRESTIGE[®]
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THE ABC AND D'S OF BIOSECURITY

1. ASK YOURSELF WITH INFORMATION WHY BIOSECURITY MATTERS

2. BE AWARE OF THE MAJOR THREATS

3. PREVENT THEM ALL EVERYWHERE – AT HOME AND AWAY

4. COMMIT TO BIOSECURITY PREPAREDNESS AND TAKE ACTION

5. DEVELOP A HERD HEALTH PLAN WITH YOUR VETERINARIAN

6. VACCINATION + BIOSECURITY IS BEST!

7. THE SCIENCE OF HEALTHIER ANIMALS

WHY BIOSECURITY MATTERS

35% of horses have been exposed to a contagious disease outbreak.

28% of horses have been exposed to a contagious disease outbreak.

21% of horses have been exposed to a contagious disease outbreak.

12% of horses have been exposed to a contagious disease outbreak.

IT ONLY TAKES ONE UNEXPECTED VISITOR

FIVE BIOSECURITY TIPS YOU CAN IMPLEMENT TODAY

1. Know who is coming to your farm.
2. Ask your veterinarian for advice.
3. Use proper biosecurity practices.
4. Practice good hygiene.
5. Report any signs of illness.

Leave no stone unturned

With an extensive product portfolio covering a host of equine disease concerns, the opportunity for education on any one topic or product is endless. Layer in new product, and ongoing research and surveillance initiatives, external forces and industry trends, key vertical editorial calendars, as well as the specific subject-matter expertise and campaign messaging we proactively deliver to support marketing goals — and you have a solid content plan.

A refresher course on equine immunology or parasitology 101; the latest in equine upper respiratory disease; neurological disease in the horse; the industry's first equine veterinary economic study. S&A has partnered with Merck to develop original content and uncover new content opportunities at every turn of our journey together, and tackled the content in many shapes and forms:

Be prepared to maximize editorial opportunities with the right expertise at the right time.

- Infographics
- Articles
- Editorial pitches
- Media briefings
- News releases
- FAQs
- Advertorials
- Quick facts
- Newsletters
- White papers
- Point of view (opinion) pieces
- Web copy
- Sales collateral
- Biographies

Capitalize on every opportunity. Even seemingly small or obscure opportunities provide occasion to extend thought leadership and brand awareness.



Results

- Tens of millions of earned media impressions over a three-year period
- Nearly 100 original and repurposed pieces of educational and brand content (and growing)
- Significantly added depth and extension to traditional brand marketing activities
- Incredible partnership and trust built with the Merck Animal Health equine veterinary team

Busy brand teams are often challenged by filling the content “void” and coming up with new ideas. Ideas are our specialty. More so, capturing the right voice and tone for the brand (and the expert) can be a trial. That’s where we excel.

Regardless of brand or species, these same principles apply. *What communication void can we help you fill?*