



Physiologic Java Jolt Supports Illegal Status of Caffeine

by: Stacey Oke, DVM, MSc

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Not only does caffeine offer a "pick-me-up" to a large chunk of North America's population, but it has once again been confirmed as a performance-enhancing drug in horses.

In the study, "Effects of intravenous administration of caffeine on physiologic variables in exercising horses," Brazilian researchers reported that the intravenous administration of 5 mg/kg caffeine 30 minutes prior to subjecting Arabian horses to an incremental exercise test on a treadmill resulted in:

- Significantly faster speeds when the horses' heart rates were 180 and 200 beats per minute in caffeine-treated horses compared to the control group;
- Improved adaptation to bouts of short intense exercise in treated Arabians, and;
- Increased glycogenolysis (production of glucose) thought to prevent the induction of mechanisms that induce fatigue.

This study supports the current Association of Racing Commissioners International rule declaring that the therapeutic use of caffeine in horses illegal.

The validity of this rule is questioned in the equine industry because of the natural and ubiquitous presence of caffeine in the environment in the form of tea, coffee, chocolate, etc. Equine professionals attest that low caffeine levels measured in blood and urine samples are due to environmental contamination and have no effect on performance.

This study was published in the December 2008 edition of the *American Journal of Veterinary Research*.

Readers are cautioned to seek the advice of a qualified veterinarian before proceeding with any diagnosis, treatment, or therapy.



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