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PROMOTING THE HUMANE AND RESPONSIBLE TREATMENT OF HORSES

Pregnant Mares' Urine (PMU)

Since 1942, PMU has been used to produce estrogen and hormone-replacement drugs such as Premarin, Prempro/Premphase, and DUAVEE, a "Prempro-Lite" which contains Premarin. PMU drugs are made by keeping mares constantly pregnant and collecting their estrogen-rich urine.

The 2002 Women's Health Initiative (WHI)—a major landmark study—concluded that the use of PMU drugs increases the risks of breast cancer, heart disease, heart attacks, strokes, blood clots, and dementia. At the time, many doctors in the United States and Canada stopped prescribing PMU drugs once the dangers were fully known. However, Pfizer (and Wyeth before it) saw what was coming down the pike and began moving production abroad, where local regulations are more lax, and there are significantly fewer FDA inspectors available to monitor production. Reportedly, this not only results in significantly more horrific conditions for the mares but also less oversight in the manufacturing of an already dangerous drug. There are reportedly 90,000 mares currently on PMU lines in China.

DUAVEE, the most recent "Prempro-Lite" Drug

With all the bad publicity and increasing awareness of the dangers of PMU drugs, we thought this awful practice would surely come to an end, but it didn't. Then the FDA approved Pfizer's DUAVEE (formerly known as Aprela) in October 2013. Although heavily disguised in both name and labeling, DUAVEE is nothing more than "Prempro-Lite" that carries the same dangerous side effects, contains Premarin, and is not only made in the same inhumane way but also contains bazedoxifene, which is not even approved as a stand-alone drug by the FDA in the U.S.

Cycle of cruelty

Life for PMU mares in Canada was brutal, and we can only imagine that it is even worse in China, where there is little to no oversight. The mares are repeatedly impregnated, and for six months of each 11-month pregnancy, most are confined in stalls that prohibit turning around, grooming themselves, and comfortably lying down. Their water intake is often regulated to produce maximum estrogen-rich urine. The mares are continually attached to plumbing, which is designed to fit over their urethras. It is held in place with movement-restricting body straps. When mares can no longer adequately "produce," most are sold for slaughter. Most of their surviving foals are either pulled and raised as "Pee Line" replacements or slaughtered for food.

The Food & Drug Administration (FDA)

PMU drugs were first approved by the FDA in 1942, followed by Prempro/Premphase, PMU creams, patches, and DUAVEE, which hit the market in 2014. PMU drugs contain impurities and unknown properties that cannot be identified. Bioidentical hormones are regarded by many medical professionals to be much safer, while not involving the use and abuse of horses to produce them. There are numerous other doctor-recommended medications on the market that women can use to effectively treat the symptoms of menopause that are safely produced in laboratories, and whose ingredients can be completely identified. **Note:** Equine Advocates is not endorsing or recommending any particular medication. All questions of a medical nature should be taken up with your doctor.