Safety Profile Evaluation of an Equine Joint Health Supplement containing Avocado/Soybean Unsaponifiables (ASU), Glucosamine, Chondroitin Sulfate and Methylsulfonylmethane (MSM)

R.W. Kettenacker, DVM, D. Griffin, DVM, MS

Nutramax Laboratories, Inc., 2208 Lakeside Blvd, Edgewood, MD 21040

Avocado/soybean unsaponifiables (ASU), glucosamine, chondroitin sulfate, and MSM are gaining popularity among veterinary practitioners for the support of joint health. This study evaluated the safety of Cosequin® ASU (Nutramax Laboratories, Inc., Edgewood, MD), which contains NMX1000™ avocado/soybean unsaponifiables, FCHG49® glucosamine hydrochloride, TRH122® low molecular weight chondroitin sulfate, MSM and manganese. In this 84-day, randomized, blinded, placebo-controlled study, 20 horses (mean age and weight: 6 years; 409 kg) were assigned to one of five groups (3 geldings and 1 mare per group). Two groups of horses received either one or three times the manufacturer’s recommended daily maintenance serving of Cosequin ASU, two groups received five times the daily maintenance serving, and one group received placebo. Horses were evaluated by daily observations; adverse events; daily feed consumption; repeated hematological and serum chemistry indices; body weight; and physical examinations. Measures analysis of variance was used to evaluate hematology, serum chemistry, and body weight parameters over time and between groups at an alpha level of 0.05 (NCSS Software). No statistically significant findings were observed over time or between the different groups. No adverse events or abnormal physical findings related to Cosequin ASU administration were observed. From the study results, it was concluded that Cosequin ASU is safe for chronic administration to horses at five times the suggested daily maintenance serving size which provided 5.5 grams avocado soybean unsaponifiables, 36 grams glucosamine HCl, 6 grams chondroitin sulfate, 25 grams MSM, and 50 milligrams manganese.