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The Costs of GREED: THE PREMARIN INDUSTRY

by Dr. Carolyn Crowder and Karen Pomroy
Equine Voices Rescue and Sanctuary



There is a travesty going on, all in the service of making a buck. It is amazing that pharmaceutical giant Pfizer is able to continue making hormone replacement (HRT) drugs that are now considered carcinogens. The newest addition to the Premarin® family is a drug for osteoporosis called Duavee® which can be prescribed for men, too. So welcome to the poison, guys!

Premarin, or “pregnant mares’ urine” (PMU), has been around since 1942. Large-breed horses are used to produce urine that is turned into a “conjugated equine estrogen.” The urine is only useful if the mare is pregnant. Nowadays, they leave out the word “equine” so no one will know where “conjugated estrogen” comes from. For 67 years, Wyeth pharmaceuticals made a killing on Premarin which became the most widely-prescribed drug for women in North America. There were nine million women taking Premarin or Prempro® at the height of the drugs popularity in the 1980s. It was a \$1 billion industry. Doctors prescribed Premarin to women going through menopause to alleviate hot flashes, depression and sleep disturbances. It was commonly accepted that Premarin also improved brain function, bone strength and libido.

Then, in 2002, came the “oops” heard around the world. A study by the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) called the “Women’s Health Initiative,” which was looking at the effects of HRT on 161,000 women, had to be halted early because there was a 41% increase of stroke, 29% increase of heart attack and 26% increase in breast cancer. The director of the study said that the cardiovascular and cancer risks were “too high a price to pay” and urged women to seek alternatives.

But there was another price to be paid... by the mares and their foals who continue to suffer in this industry. Prior to the findings of this study there were 50,000 horses in Canada and the US kept on PMU farms. Now there are 4,000. But this is not a victory because Pfizer, which bought out Wyeth in 2009, has opened PMU farms in China, Kazakhstan, and Poland where there are no pesky regulations on the industry and people eat horse meat. It is also helpful that animal rights movements are almost non-existent in these countries. China alone has 80,000 mares confined to the “pee-lines.”

The regulations that exist in Canada are “voluntary” and there is much abuse. Mares stand on concrete in stalls that are too small to turn around in, let alone lie down. They are hooked up to urine collection bags 24 hours a day and are given insufficient water to make the urine more potent. They are fed well, but this is so they will have a greater weight when sold for slaughter. When the mares no longer can become pregnant a few are rescued, but the majority go to slaughter for human consumption in Europe and Asia. Their foals (the so-called “by-product” of the industry) often die from hunger or from being turned out in the cold too young. Many foals also go to slaughter since they are more valuable sold as meat than alive.

If women would refuse to take Premarin products, and both women and men refused the new Duavee, horses could be spared this abuse and suffering. Ninety percent of women who take Premarin live in the US. It is truly amazing that the FDA has approved Duavee with all the evidence against its twin, Premarin. There are new Premarin cream ads on TV. If you listen closely you can hear all the risks listed quickly at the end. They at least have to be honest about that! ☺☺



Mystic with her son, Wyatt.

Mystic came to Equine Voices Rescue in 2005 along with thirty other pregnant mares and foals. She was pregnant and had her six-month-old colt, Kodi, at her side. Mystic spent all of her life on a farm where she stood in a cramped stall, pregnant, day after day, only to have her urine harvested for production of the hormone replacement therapy drug Premarin. If Equine Voices had not arranged to bring Mystic to the sanctuary, she and her babies would have gone to slaughter, only for her meat to be shipped abroad for human consumption. Today, this beautiful horse lives with five of her herd mates and has, for the first time, been allowed to raise Kodi and her son, Wyatt.

About the authors:

Carolyn Crowder, PH.D is a licensed psychologist and has lived and practiced in the Tucson area (now in Tubac) for the past 30 years. She received her doctorate from the University of Arizona in 1980. Since then she has worked in many different settings including juvenile court, public schools, university counseling centers, Las Familias and the Department of Corrections.

Dr. Crowder specializes in parent training and is an Adlerian practitioner. She works with families to establish respectful, effective childrearing methods that are neither autocratic nor indulgent. She also maintains a small private practice and enjoys giving lectures about Adlerian principles to groups of parents, teachers and mental health professionals. Her current interest is the excessive psychotropic drugging of children for behavioral problems.

Dr. Crowder has appeared on *20/20*, *Today*, *The Early Show*, *Dateline*, *NPR*, and *Lifetime Live* as well as many local TV and radio programs throughout the country. She is the author of three parenting books, the national bestseller *Backtalk* (1998), *Whining* (2000) and *Eating, Sleeping and Getting Up* (2002.)

Karen Pomroy was born in Germany and spent part of her life overseas. At the age of 13, she and her family moved to Rochester, New York where she later graduated with a degree in business management and marketing.

Her love of horses started when she was a young girl, and not until she was in her mid-thirties did she reconnect with horses by volunteering at a wild horse sanctuary in California. It was here that she rescued Spirit, a three-year-old Arabian, and an older horse named Big Bud who was being abused by his owner. After learning about the Premarin industry, Karen rescued Gulliver and three other Premarin foals who were headed to slaughter and purchased a small ranch in Amado, Arizona. This was the beginning of an eleven-year-journey of rescuing, educating and running Equine Voices Rescue & Sanctuary™, a now nationally-recognized organization. Today, Spirit, Gulliver and his friends live on fifteen acres in Southern Arizona and continue to fight the fight against equine cruelty. To learn more about Equine Voices, log on to www.equinevoices.org.

www.naturalhorse.com



• **Call to action to raise awareness about the PMU industry and alternatives to mare's urine-based hormone products.**

• EDUCATION:

- www.redrover.org/about-premarin
- <http://www.premarin.org/vitalpmu.html>
- http://www.chai.org.il/en/compassion/experiment_pharmaceuticals/experiment_premarin.htm

• PETITIONS:

- www.change.org/p/pfizer-take-horse-urine-out-of-hormone-medication/u/10456231
- <http://forcechange.com/66065/end-unnecessary-torment-of-horses-on-premarin-farms/>

