RANITIDINE RECALL AND YOUR HORSE

It seems everyone has heard the news about the recall of Zantac (Ranitidine) due to the USDA findings. How long this recall lasts and how this will affect the equine industry is unknown.

Ranitidine is an H2 Blocker (Histamine 2) that decreases the acidity of the stomach. In horses, we use the medication for the treatment and prevention of gastric ulcers. Other medications are available to treat ulcers in horses including other H2 blockers such as Tagamet (Cimetidine) and Pepcid (Famotidine). Omeprazole (Ulcergard/Gastrogard) is considered to be the best preventative/treatment of ulcers in horses in horses and is the only FDA approved treatment for EGUS. Omeprazole works by reducing or eliminating acid production at the level of the stomach (gastric) cells.

The FDA released a report that some forms of Ranitidine have been found to have a cancer-causing chemical known as NDMA. This has lead to voluntary recalls by manufacturers and many pharmacies pulling the item from their shelves. NDMA is a chemical that is highly suspected of causing cancer in humans and is particularly toxic to the liver. It has been found in other human medications in the past including some blood pressure medications.

The long term effects of the recall are unknown. It may be determined that the levels in Zantac are below those known to cause cancer or a more purified form of Zantac may become available. Zantac itself is not on trial but the fact that a contaminant is found in some forms of Zantac is a concern. Until such time that Zantac is cleared for re-release it is going to become unavailable or extremely expensive to use in our equine companions.

Currently, ranitidine is available hit and miss on some online pharmacies such as VetsFirstChoice and ValleyVet. We can have it formulated from our online formulating chemist in many concentrations. Please contact our office for more information.