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ANTI-DOPING RESEARCH DEVELOPS NEW EQUINE TEST FOR THE POWERFUL BLOOD-BOOSTING DRUG CERA

(Los Angeles, November 24, 2009) – With generous funding from the Equine Drug Research Institute (EDRI) and the equine-racing community, Anti-Doping Research, Inc. (ADR), one of the world's leading scientific organizations battling performance-enhancing drugs in sports, has developed a new equine test for the powerful blood-boosting drug CERA. The announcement comes in a peer-reviewed article published in the recently released August issue of the quarterly scientific journal, *Comparative Exercise Physiology*.

Like the test developed not long ago for human competitors, the new test for horses successfully detects CERA in plasma after the drug has been administered intravenously.

“We are proud of this development and happy to announce it,” says Don Catlin, M.D., founder and chief executive of ADR and one of the authors of the report. “If implemented, this new test will close a major testing loophole and help eliminate the use of one of today’s most powerful doping products in equine sports.”

CERA, short for the brand name Mircera, is one of the newest members of the erythropoietin (EPO) family of drugs, also referred to as biosimilars or erythrocyte stimulating agents (ESAs). All such drugs are prohibited in human and equine competition as they enhance performance.

Developed by the Swiss research-focused healthcare company Roche to help patients with certain kidney diseases and anemia, CERA boosts red cells in the blood so they deliver more oxygen to muscles. The drug lasts longer and requires fewer injections than EPO. Some human competitors have recently tested positive for CERA, and it is widely thought that the drug is being used as a performance-enhancer in equine sports as well.

ADR’s study was conducted on horses, one treated mature female thoroughbred and ten healthy standard-bred control horses, using two methods based on two different principles: a rapid, automated, chemiluminescent immunometric or Immulite assay and an isoelectric focusing, double-blot (IEF-DB) test. Both tests detected CERA in the samples collected from the treated horse at different times after the administration of CERA, while the samples from all ten control horses were negative. The Immulite test, intended as a screen, gives numerical results for a large number of samples very efficiently, while the IEF-DB test, intended as a confirmation test, provides a definitive visual pattern after a 2-3 day process.

“What is particularly satisfying and worth noting,” says George Maylin, DVM, Ph.D. of the Equine Drug Testing and Research Program at the College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University and a co-author of the report, “is that the inexpensive Immulite tests were sufficient to detect even small amounts of CERA in horses.”

Others who participated in the development of the test and contributed to the article include Sabrina Benchaar, Ph.D. of ADR, Sandra Neades of ADR, Miranda Timmons of ADR, and Professor Kenneth McKeever of Rutgers University.

Catlin is “widely considered the most respected chemist in the sports anti-doping community” (*Washington Post*, March 13, 2007). He founded the first anti-doping lab in the United States, the UCLA Olympic Analytical Laboratory, and today heads ADR. He and his team have been instrumental in detecting such performance-enhancing drugs as artificial testosterone and the designer steroids norbolethone and THG.

The equine CERA test marks the second noted breakthrough Catlin and his team have had involving EPO-related performance-enhancing drugs. At the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, they reported the blood booster darbepoetin alfa, another long-acting form of EPO, in human competitors, for the first time in sports.

ADR’s mission is to help rid sport of performance-enhancing drugs by creating novel solutions to modern-day doping issues. The Los Angeles-based non-profit organization focuses on research, specialized analysis, education, program development and collaboration.

“We owe a debt of thanks to EDRI and the equine-racing community for funding the CERA project,” says Oliver Catlin, Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of ADR. “Not only did their support make the development of this new test possible, but they also provided the initial funding upon which ADR was founded. We at ADR, and all those who want to see drug-free sport and competition, simply cannot thank them enough for their commitment.”

Other major contributors to ADR include Amgen, Major League Baseball, the National Football League/National Football League Players Association Research & Education Foundation, and the United States Anti-Doping Agency.

For more information about Anti-Doping Research and its activities, visit ADR’s website at www.antidopingresearch.org, e-mail ADR at info@antidopingresearch.org, or call ADR’s offices at 310-482-6925. To show support for ADR and its work, join it on Facebook at <http://apps.facebook.com/causes/160495?m=3flcca43>.

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