



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Important Information Regarding the Use of the Prohibited Substance Phenibut ( $\beta$ -phenyl gamma aminobutyric acid)

From the USEF

**Lexington, Ky.** - Tasked with protecting the welfare of equine athletes and ensuring the balance of competition, the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) Equine Drugs and Medications Program constantly monitors products and product claims. From time-to-time products appear on the equine supplement market making claims of their effects on the performance of horses in competition. USEF members are ultimately responsible for compliance with the forbidden substance policy, and encouraged to audit the ingredient lists of supplement products for substances prohibited in USEF competition.

Recently, a problematic substance has come to the attention of the USEF Equine Drugs and Medications Program. Phenibut ( $\beta$ -phenyl gamma aminobutyric acid) is considered a derivative of gamma aminobutyric acid (GABA), and effective immediately, Phenibut ( $\beta$ -phenyl gamma aminobutyric acid) or any product containing Phenibut ( $\beta$ -phenyl gamma aminobutyric acid) is considered a forbidden substance under USEF rules. There are no current recognized medical uses for this substance; therefore reporting administration utilizing a Medication Report Form, pursuant to GR411, is not applicable.

There have been a number of recent positive findings for  $\beta$ -phenyl gamma aminobutyric acid and members have been notified. This ingredient has been found in a product called Focus Calm supplied by Uckele. Phenibut ( $\beta$ -phenyl gamma aminobutyric acid) is also available as a single supplement in the U.S., but is not considered a pharmaceutical. There are no known scientific studies documenting its safety in horses and there are no known legitimate therapeutic purposes for this substance to be used in the horse.

USEF members are encouraged to be aware of what they might be administering to their horse. 'Calming' supplements, intended to alter behavior, should be regarded with

a high degree of scrutiny when fed to competition horses. It is important for members to understand that the names of substances included on ingredient lists may not always be easily associated with published forbidden substances. The FDA does not formally regulate animal supplements, and a high degree of variability can be present across companies and manufacturing practices. There is no guarantee that the constituents found in the product are consistent with what is listed on the list of the ingredients.

Questions regarding the use of equine drugs and medications may be directed to the USEF Equine Drugs and Medications hotline at [1-800-633-2472](tel:1-800-633-2472).