

Equine Drug Screen

Confidently approve your client's new horse purchase with TVMDL's test offering.



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To better serve the laboratory's large equine clientele, the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL) in College Station now offers an equine-specific drug screen for pre-purchase exams. Previously, veterinarians screening horses for tranquilizing or pain-relieving drugs when conducting a pre-purchase exam would note the tests needed on the accession form. Now, with one click, the veterinarian can indicate the necessary tests to satisfy a client looking to buy a new horse.

The screen assists the veterinarian conducting the pre-purchase exam by unmasking any drugs hiding the animal's defects. A variety of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, antipsychotic drugs and antihypertensive drugs can be detected.

Test: TVMDL runs the screen via enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay and liquid chromatography-mass spectrometry testing.

Sample: Minimum 10cc serum.

Cost: \$72 for in-state clients and \$144 for out-of-state, with a turnaround time averaging one business week.

Cliff Honnas, DVM, owns Texas Equine Hospital in Bryan, Texas. The clinic treats Western performance, hunter-jumper, dressage and race-bred horses. Dr. Honnas offers every potential buyer the option to conduct a pre-purchase drug screen.

“Part of my pre-purchase exam is to go through the horse—flex, trot and identify whether or not there are any issues that adversely affect performance or use—and then I suggest the buyer do a drug screen to determine whether or not the horse has any drugs on board,” said Dr. Honnas. “A horse could look totally sound when I do the things we do to discern any issues. The problem being if that horse has been administered any drugs, either long-acting tranquilizer drugs to calm it or pain relieving drugs like bute, that horse will look sound.

“The buyer buys the horse, takes it home and the drugs wear off; all of a sudden, we have a lameness issue. The person with the liability is me, if I don’t offer them a drug screen.”

Dr. Honnas admits that not all owners opt to pay for the drug screen. However, those that choose to run the pre-purchase drug screen benefit from a clear conscience when purchasing.

“If we do a drug screen I suggest waiting until [the results] come back before the sale is finalized,” he said. “Very rarely do we have a positive test. Most sellers are honest about what the horse has had as far as drugs, or hasn’t had, but this is a way to have all the cards on the table.”

For more information on the TVMDL equine pre-purchase drug screen, contact the College Station laboratory at 979.845.3414.

Visit tvmdl.tamu.edu for a complete list of test offerings.



About TVMDL:

The Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory protects animal and human health through diagnostics. An agency of the Texas A&M University System, TVMDL comprises two full-service laboratories, in College Station and Amarillo, and two poultry laboratories, in Center and Gonzales.

TVMDL is among 12 core laboratories in the National Animal Health Laboratory Network, a group of state and regional laboratories designed to provide a nationwide surge testing, response, and recovery capacity in the event of an animal disease outbreak.

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