

# LaminaSaver Lives Up To Its Claims

*We've never seen anything like it for treating chronic laminitis, and all our testers agreed it's worth the hefty price.*

**T**reating chronic laminitis basically comes down to aggressive dietary management and perfectionist-level hoof care. Veterinary treatment generally involves prescription medications that control inflammation and pain, such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and, of course, ice-cold water during the acute phases.

Our February 2002 laminitis article discussed causes of laminitis and common therapies, but non-drug therapies for laminitis are hard to come by. In a perfect world, we would find a laminitis nutraceutical that works as well as glucosamine for arthritis. We may have.

## LAMINASAVER

Figuerola Laboratories' advertising immediately caught our consumer

### Chronic Laminitis



- Consider LaminaSaver, possibly at double dose.
- Use the best farrier you can find—regularly.
- Opt for ice boots for treating acute episodes.
- Get X-rays done before and after treatment.



*LaminaSaver is basically a combination of ingredients that fight inflammation and promote better circulation.*

eyes. The claims for LaminaSaver are incredible: It provides pain relief, controls inflammation, enhances growth of normal foot and, most amazingly, it will “derotate” coffin bones. While case reports on the website often report response within days to two weeks, the general product description cautions to allow at least a month. The company recommends a program of administration for 12 months, which would provide adequate time for a hoof to completely regrow.

Like many products, the exact mixture is proprietary, but basically it is a combination of anti-inflammatory/antioxidants, connective tissue precursors and protectants, and ingredients to promote vascular dilation and better circulation/oxygen delivery, e.g. nitric oxide promoters.

The recommended initial dosage

is one scoop in the morning and one in the evening, preferably on an empty stomach. At \$4 a day, the product is hardly inexpensive. After three to six months, the dose is reduced to one scoop a day. The price is \$79.99/lb. for 40 scoops.

We had incredible results with LaminaSaver (see page 12). Our field-trial horses all had a history of laminitis, many being maintained on high-dose bute just to keep them walking. Several were rescue horses with additional physical difficulties beyond poor hoof condition.

All the horses showed improvement while on the supplement, most returning to a level of soundness the owners hadn't seen in years. Most horses increased voluntary movement, even trotting and cantering, with positive changes in their “zest” for life as well.

Follow-up X-rays on the horses



*Classic founder rings on one of our trial horses, who had foundered one year before being tried on the LaminaSaver supplement therapy.*

also showed improvements, although a description of the coffin bone “derotating” or reattaching may not be exactly what’s going on.

In the pre- and post-X-rays of our test horses, we did see improvements in the alignment of the coffin bone and the quality of bone in the coffin bone. However, alignment changes were only noted when the horse was regularly attended by a competent farrier who worked to both align the axis of the coffin bone with the hoof wall by removing excess toe and also the bottom of the coffin bone with the ground by not letting the heels get too high.

The difference with the LaminaSaver—and good foot care—is likely due to the new hoof growth having good laminar attachments to the coffin bone. As long as correct trimming was maintained, so that the hoof capsule wasn’t mechanically pulling the older and weaker laminae apart, the coffin bone could stay in a good alignment.

We did find some discrepancy in the product’s effective dose. With horses or ponies over 700 to 800 pounds, the loading dose of two full scoops was either ineffective or only minimally effective. When the dosage was doubled for larger animals, the results were rapid and dramatic.

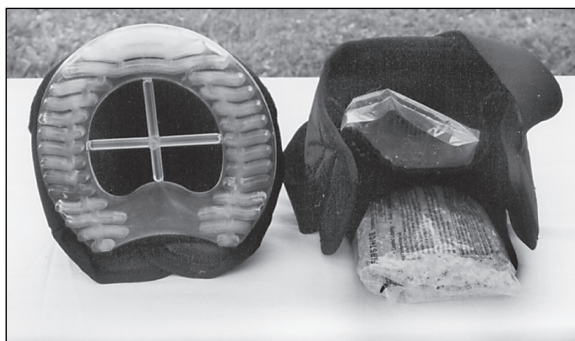
Figuerola suggested we try a combination of their InflamaSaver with the LaminaSaver, rather than doubling the loading dose of LaminaSaver. This combination was effective as well, although either way the daily cost is high. At double dose, it’s \$8/day initially, with \$4/day for maintenance, compared to the label-recommended levels at \$4/day loading dose and \$2/day for maintenance.

Incredibly, despite the cost, everyone who used this product agreed it was worth it since nothing else had produced equivalent results.

#### PHYTO-QUENCH

Avoiding long-term NSAID use in a horse with laminitis can be a major issue. Devil’s claw-based products are often a good alternative (see June 2001), but we also had luck with a new herbal remedy.

Phyto-Quench combines a long list



*The simplest method we’ve found for cold therapy is to use Ice Horse Big Black Boots, which use a cold pack to deliver effective cooling to foundering hooves.*

of potent antioxidants and herbal ingredients that reads like a who’s who in arthritis control and an emphasis on maintaining good circulation. It sounded to us like just the thing for laminitis as well.

In two acute and two chronic laminitis cases, the horses were taken off maintenance bute of from 1 to 3 grams per day but remained as comfortable on the Phyto-Quench. The dosage for a pony was one scoop per day (38 grams), and horses started on two scoops per day. All but one horse were able to drop down to one scoop.

One mare with chronic low-grade laminitis didn’t respond well to bute. She was somewhat better on Banamine, but would go off feed with continued use of either one. After four days of Phyto-Quench, she became sound with no loss of appetite. This horse had minimal rotation but poor hoof quality, white-line separation, plus sole tenderness. Although the ongoing pain suggested chronic active laminitis, her feet were never hot. In fact, they were cold.

Examination with the Raytek thermography gun (see June 2001) was abnormal. Instead of the usual warmer readings at the coronary band and upper foot, her front feet showed no difference between pastern and foot readings, while the hind feet showed a more likely three-degree difference. After four days on Phyto-Quench, the coronary band area and upper hoof wall registered two degrees warmer and the mare was sound.

Phyto-Quench is \$56.95/4 lbs., which is 48 38-gram servings at \$1.19/serving or \$2.38/loading dose.

## An Experienced, Skilled Farrier Is Necessary For Recovery

If there was one lesson driven home time after time in this lengthy trial, it was the importance of proper foot care. Trimming every six to eight weeks just isn’t enough. If your farrier is insisting on seeing the horse every two weeks or less, there’s probably good reason.

Because the heel grows more quickly, it’s often necessary to remove more heel than toe. If this isn’t done, the back of the coffin bone becomes “jacked up,” just like it would if the heel was wedged. This tips the coffin bone down toward the sole and, if the horse is already rotated, increases sole pressure in this area. On radiographs, it can also create the impression that the horse is more rotated than he actually is.

Many times during this trial a horse would worsen for no reason and a check showed what he needed a was trim. Once the feet were corrected by the farrier, relief was rapid.



*Laminitis shoeing may involve the application of a heart-bar shoe.*

### EASY COLD THERAPY

You may hear critics of cold therapy argue that cold is only appropriate for the prodromal stages of laminitis, before the horse becomes obviously lame, at which point the cold would help interrupt the production of inflammatory mediators that can cause vasospasm. They fear that cold after this point may worsen vascular shunting in the feet. However, it's never been proven that the time-honored treatment of cooling the feet is harmful in any way.

While extreme cold could cause shunting in the hoof, most cooling methods don't even come close to producing freezing temperatures,

and when laminitic feet are obviously hot and inflamed, cooling does provide significant relief and is likely to help limit the inflammatory response. Getting it done easily is another story.

Running streams are great, if you have one. Otherwise you have to either stand the horse in tubs or hose the legs/feet. Both are limited by how willing the horse is to stand, are messy and are time consuming. Soaking is also often contraindicated as bacteria in the water can help seed abscesses. Oversoftening the feet also makes them more tender.

A cleaner option, which keeps the feet dry and also allows the horse to

lie down during treatment, is the new MacKinnon Ice Horse Big Black Boot (\$85 per boot). A skid-resistant, plastic polymer, wide-web, oversized bar shoe is molded to the bottom of a durable padded synthetic upper boot that opens with flaps in the back.

Inside the boot is heavy-duty netting on the sides/front and bottom that hold cooling packs (water, propylene glycol and synthetic polymers). The packs remain pliable after freezing. The boot closes securely with hook-and-loop straps. The boots provide effective, but not excessive, cooling for up to two hours. The boot works great for horses with sole bruises and sore feet as well.

## LaminaSaver Field-Trial Horses Case Histories

### RESCUE PONY

This 18-year-old pony was found with severely deformed feet and was lame. She was thin but had a huge fatty crest. After a year on a hay/grass-only diet with some flare-ups when on young grass, she remained lame and cresty. X-rays showed extensive rotation and changes in the tip of the coffin bone.

She was to be started on LaminaSaver at double dose, but we later learned the caretaker was giving three to four times the maintenance dose. After three weeks, the pony's crest was reducing rapidly and she trotted freely. She even became difficult to catch, with a rapid, animated walk.

As always, these are field trials under real-life situations, and this pony was too difficult to dose on the recommended empty stomach. Instead, we gave the LaminaSaver once a day in a small amount of soaked beet pulp and senior-feed pellets. Although we would have preferred otherwise, only oat forage and alfalfa were available.

About a month into the trial, the pony accidentally gained free access to the oat forage, which resulted in sore, hot feet. Her LaminaSaver dose was increased 50% with no other treatment used. Within 48 hours, she was back to normal, whereas in previous episodes she would be sore for weeks.

On the supplement, her feet became a more normal temperature, which was warmer than her usual cold-feeling feet. Toward the end of the trial, the pony had another laminitis flare-up that the owner

attributes to spring grass. (No treatment can eliminate the risk.) The pony continued to do well with her crest still shrinking. Note: When our trial ended, the owner didn't continue to use LaminaSaver and the pony's crest began to enlarge and harden again.

### CROSSBRED PONY

A 32-year-old Cushing's pony had been laminitic and lame for years. His hoof growth, especially at the heels, was often rapid. He started on two scoops per day of LaminaSaver in October 2001, at which time he was extremely sore. Within three weeks, the pony walked freely and even trotted. After five months, the hoof quality is good and has remained sound, "soundest he's been in years."

### ARABIAN GELDING

We found a 19-year-old Arabian gelding who was diagnosed with Cushing's and foundered severely in November 2000. He was doing poorly in shoes, and the horse's heels were too high (he's the horse in the hoof photos in this article), tipping the coffin bone down toward the ground where there was an obvious sole bulge.

The horse was extraordinarily lame. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 "dead" lame and 10 being merely pasture sound, he was a 1. He went barefoot with a Strasser trim in June 2001, progressing to a 4 by late September, when LaminaSaver was started. He received one scoop morning and evening in a small wet beet



*Ace eventually began to feel so good he actually jumped his paddock fence to join a buddy.*



## BOTTOM LINE

Without question, the regular help of an experienced farrier is crucial in treating chronic laminitis. In addition, we recommend investing in X-rays. Both your veterinarian and farrier will be better able to advise you when they can actually see what's going on in the hoof.

While we lean toward the side of "barefoot is better," the ultimate decision on shoes depends on your horse and your veterinarian's and farrier's recommendations.

The boots from MacKinnon are excellent, and we've not seen anything that makes cooling hooves simpler or more effective. In addition,



*Note the rings curving down at the heel because of more rapid heel growth than toe growth.*

they're durable. We'd make them a tack-room basic, not just for laminitis episodes, but for pain relief with sole bruising and sore feet.

Without question, however, our most impressive results for chronic laminitis were with LaminaSaver. We believe it basically lived up to its claims and recommend it as worth the money. **HJ**

**Contact Your Local Tack Store Or:**  
**LaminaSaver**, Figuerola Laboratories, [www.figuerola-laboratories.com](http://www.figuerola-laboratories.com) or 800/219-1147; **Phyto-Quench**, Uckele Health and Nutrition, [www.uckele.com](http://www.uckele.com) or 800/248-0330; **MacKinnon Ice Horse Big Black Boot** [www.mackinnonicehorse.com](http://www.mackinnonicehorse.com) or 800/786-6633.

pulp feed and an additional scoop squirted into his mouth. By October, he was a 7 on the lameness scale with the combination of weekly or biweekly trims and the LaminaSaver. By late October, he jumped his paddock fence to find a buddy who was being ridden.

After starting the barefoot trim, the gelding began to show new growth that was free of rings. By November, he had about two inches of smooth, new hoof growth already. The Lamina Saver dosage was tapered down, and by late December he was getting ½ scoop twice a day and doing well, averaging an 8 soundness.

### ARABIAN RESCUE MARE

A 22-year-old Arabian mare had foundered eight months prior to starting LaminaSaver. She had severe rotation and walked tender-footed, despite being on bute. She had evidence of sole bruising, especially at the tip of the coffin bone. The white line was widely separated, her sole was poor, and she showed little hoof growth, with prominent laminitis rings.

While on LaminaSaver (two scoops/day, weight about 800 lbs.), her feet started growing again. The new growth was smooth, normal and parallel with the coffin bone. At times she moved stiffly, but it was always associated with being overdue for a trim. After two months, normal white-line tissue was noted, and sole bruising was no longer evident. The hoof growth progressed well, and she was taken off bute, walking comfortably. The tip of her coffin bone, which had been resorbing, was confirmed to be recalcifying again.



*Nasty was insulin-resistant and had an incredible 13-degree of coffin-bone rotation.*

### QUARTER HORSE MARE

A Quarter Horse mare with a severe injury to a rear deep flexor tendon repeatedly developed abscesses in both hind feet. She was suspected to have low-grade laminitis in the foot opposite the injury and was lame on 4 grams of bute a day. After 2.5 months on LaminaSaver, her feet healed, she stood comfortably. Her daily bute was ½ gram.

### APPALOOSA/QUARTER HORSE

An Appaloosa/Quarter Horse cross gelding, at least 22 years old, was insulin-resistant (possible Cushing's) and had a history of multiple laminitis episodes. The most recent had been in May 2001. He had an unbelievable 12.5 degrees rotation in one front foot, and 13 in the other. Not surprisingly, the horse was basically crippled and on constant bute. He started on the two-scoop dose of LaminaSaver, but showed no exciting improvement after about a month, except that the owner was able to taper down the bute dose. We doubled the LaminaSaver dose to four scoops per day and, within 10 days, the horse was off bute and more lively, moving better on walks. By two weeks he was cantering.

### MEDIUM PONY

A 30-year-old medium pony developed laminitis every year in the fall, remaining sore, even on a dry lot, for at least four months while on high-dose bute. The pony was six weeks into this cycle when we stopped his bute and put him on LaminaSaver. Within a week he was walking comfortably, even trotting. At the one-month mark, he was growing foot free of laminitis rings.