

## **Fluoxetine: Alternative treatment for Anxiety and Compulsions in the Horse**

**BRAND NAMES AND OTHER NAMES:** Reconcile, Prozac

### **BACKGROUND**

Anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder and depression are common problems for humans and animals alike. One of the more widely used classes of anxiolytics are the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, SSRIs. Serotonin is the neurotransmitter in the brain associated with mood elevation and reduced aggression.

### **USES OF FLUOXETINE**

SSRIs can decrease anxiety, fear, reactivity to fear-inducing stimuli and aggression.

Animal behavior issues; separation anxiety in dogs and cats; compulsive chewing; self-mutilation; aggression; equine compulsions (cribbing and wind sucking)

### **DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION**

Recommended dosing in horses is 0.25 to 0.5mg/kg orally with food every 24 hours. \*\*Therapy may require 2-4 weeks to yield improvement.

Supplied as: 10mg tabs; 10mg, 20mg, 40mg caps; and 8mg, 16mg, 32mg chewable tabs for dogs. Compounded preparation: Oral Suspension 100mg/ml.

### **PRECAUTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS**

The most common side effect is drowsiness or lethargy in small animals; however, most horses treated with fluoxetine do not exhibit sedation and continue to function normally.

Stomach upset and appetite suppression are common in dogs.

\*\*While no cases of fluoxetine-induced colic have been reported, some references recommend beginning with a low dose given once daily with food and then titrate upward to the desired dose due to the presence of serotonin receptors in the GI tract.

### **DRUG INTERACTIONS**

Fluoxetine should not be used in combination with drugs that could lower the seizure threshold, such as acepromazine.

Fluoxetine should not be given in conjunction with MAOIs.