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Thursday, January 8, 2015 [Print](#)



## Lakeland Animal Nutrition Fined for Contaminated Equine Feed

*Daniella Vitale owned Sebastian for 10-years before he was euthanized Tuesday. His health continued to fail from monensin toxicity. Olie (below) was also euthanized.*

by RMHP Staff,

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is fining Lakeland Animal Nutrition after the company produced adulterated equine feed that has killed eleven horses to date. According to the state agency, its investigation uncovered four violations.

The state began investigating a report of monensin toxicity after three horses died at the Davie hunter/jumper boarding and show stable, Masterpiece Equestrian Center, in mid-October 2014. Lakeland Animal Nutrition, an Alltech company, issued a voluntary recall soon after. The company also ceased production of all of its equine feed. In November, the manufacturer announced it would no longer produce equine feed. Management said the decision would allow them to focus on its core manufacturing

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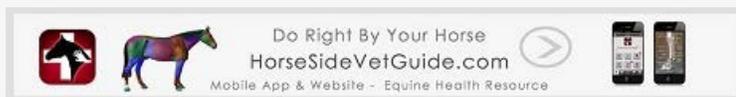


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competencies in beef, dairy, poultry and swine feed production.



During the state's investigation, samples of equine feed produced by Lakeland Animal Nutrition were tested. One sample tested positive for monensin and a second sample tested positive for monensin and lasolocid. Both ingredients are toxic to horses. The state found two violations for adulterating and misbranding commercial equine feed and two violations of distributing adulterated feed under Florida statute 580. The maximum fine of \$1,000 per violation was imposed.

**Lab: ADM Equine Feed Contaminated in Alabama NEW**

Lakeland Animal Nutrition can request a hearing or it can pay the \$4,000 fine. The company's General Manager, Jonathan Lang wouldn't say what the company plans to do, but he released the following statement Wednesday to Rate My Horse PRO, "...Although Lakeland Animal Nutrition is no longer manufacturing equine feeds, we have been reviewing all internal procedures so as to ensure the safety and quality of all of our products as well as honor the trust of our customers." Lang would not divulge whether another Alltech company would begin producing the company's equine feeds.

The state's investigation determined the equine feed became contaminated after the Lakeland based mill failed to follow its clean out protocol. Lakeland Animal Nutrition produced equine feed, like Status Pellet Formula and Equilete Pellet Formula. It also manufactured medicated feeds for other livestock.



Graham Farms Far Off Dry Cow Mineral is one medicated feed that contains the active ingredient monensin, which helps increase cows' milk production. The feed comes with a package warning that cautions users not to allow horses or other equines access the feed because it contains monensin, which can be fatal.

A computerized mixing program with a lock-out feature was supposed to stop any mixing of a non-medicated feed until the appropriate clean out procedure was followed. A minimum of three 4,000 lb. batches of non-medicated feed for beef or dairy cattle should have been sequentially scheduled prior to a non-medicated equine feed. That did not happen, according to the state's investigation. Documents state there was no other feed run between the Graham Farms medicated cow feed and the production of the Equilete, which created the toxic batch.

The consequences were deadly. Half of the horses - or eleven - at Masterpiece Equestrian have died or been euthanized to prevent their suffering after they ate the tainted feed. "This is a horrible tragedy," says Debra Buis, who boards her teen daughters' two horses at the farm. She has been outspoken since the beginning she says to ensure other horse owners are aware of the consequences.

Eleven horses remain alive, but are failing. "We have to make sure the horses don't suffer." At the same time, the farm's family looks for strength from within. "We have to be strong for the kids. These horses were loved by all of them."

Lakeland Animal Nutrition reached a confidential settlement with the majority of the horses' owners prior to Christmas.

A spokesperson for the department says it has not received any additional reports of horse illnesses or deaths related to the feed produced by Lakeland Animal Nutrition.

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