

## Horse Doping Could Be Widespread

The [British Horseracing Authority](#) admitted that the doping crisis of the sport had spread and horses from a number of yards in Newmarket had been prescribed Sungate, a prohibited joint treatment containing the steroid Stanozolol.

The authority is presently investigating the use of Sungate after its use came to light when a number of horses trained by Gerard Butler tested positive for steroids in February. It was later discovered that the veterinary practice which advised Butler to use Sungate gave the same advice to other trainers though the British Horseracing Authority was not prepared to say how many other yards were now under suspicion.

A BHA statement hinted that the veterinary practice in question had not given a list of the horses which were treated with the prohibited joint treatment and that its investigators were coming at it through those trainers which are clients of the practice and going through their medication records, where its use should have been recorded. The fact that veterinary surgeons do not come under the jurisdiction of the BHA and are under no obligation to name names makes things difficult for the BHA. The statement concluded by emphasizing that under the Rules of Racing, licensed trainers are “strictly liable” for any prohibited substances administered to horses under their care and control, which means that using a prohibited substance even under veterinary advice is no defense.

According to the BHA statement, Sungate is intended to assist in the treatment and management of joint disease in horses. It contains Stanozolol, an anabolic steroid and consequently a prohibited substance under the [Rules of Racing](#). It also disclosed that the BHA has met with representatives of the veterinary practice in question and as a result of that meeting the BHA believes that Gerard Butler was not the only trainer to whom the administration of Sungate was recommended. The statement also revealed that veterinary surgeons are not bound by the Rules of Racing, but are subject to their own rules of professional conduct and therefore in order to establish the extent of the use of the product, BHA Investigating Officers will be interviewing trainers who are known to use the same veterinary practice.

Butler went public with the news that he was also under investigation for steroid use shortly after Mahmood Al Zarooni had been banned for eight years for administering steroids. Butler remarked that he had been advised to use it by his vets. The trainer is in added trouble for administering the product himself that is illegal and he estimates that 100 horses had been treated with the product across Newmarket.

In another development, seven horses, including the 2012 St Leger winner Encke, failed tests for anabolic steroids. The new results take the total number to 22 of Godolphin-owned thoroughbreds that are consequently suspended from racing for six months. Racing manager Simon Crisford said it is obviously very disappointing that seven further horses have tested positive for Stanozolol. Crisford added these results highlight why H.H. Sheikh Mohammed took the decision to lock down the stables at Moulton Paddocks until every Godolphin horse in training at Newmarket had been tested.