

Happy Trails

Local company taking care of horses

By Lisa Allmendinger
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The happy-looking Standardbred horse named Uncle on the company's label tells the story of an Ann Arbor company that has a line of six holistic healthcare equine products.

Uncle's Happy Horse Holistic Products are a blend of all natural Chinese herbs and essentials manufactured in Ann Arbor with a warehouse in Saline.

Sales have grown exponentially over the past six years. The product is used by horsemen, from derby-level trainers to hunter-jumper, pleasure horse riders and rodeo stables, says owner Joe Butcko.

John Shirreff is one of those derby-level trainers.

"We have been using Gut Protector for over a year and it has been effective keeping the horses in the feed tubs," Shirreff says.

He is just one of Happy Horse's happy customers, Butcko says, adding that the line of products is used on athletic horses across the country.

The company was founded by Dr. Herbert Friedman, a retired veterinarian, who died in February. Butcko says his partner spent 10 years in Japan practicing as a veterinarian and studying herbal therapy.

"It was very important to us to make a product that was beneficial to the horse and that was affordable for the owner/trainer," he says.

Its flagship product, called Gut Protector, specifically targets ulcerated tissues and other intestinal issues caused



Photos by Lisa Allmendinger

Joe Butcko, owner of Uncle's Happy Horse Holistic Products, is surrounded by some of the equine products manufactured in Ann Arbor.

Fast Facts

Uncle's Happy Horse
Manufactured in Ann Arbor, offices in Saline
Six products in the line
Web site: www.uncle-shappyhorse.com

by stress.

One gallon is \$149 and is given twice a day. One gallon will last one horse about 64 days.

"Athletic horses get stressed from being trailered and being in different stalls," Butcko

says. "Gut Protector addresses the stress."

Dosed directly into the horse's mouth, the molasses and anise flavor are appealing to equines.

"One customer says her horse looks forward to it like a treat," says Jennifer Peck, who works for Uncle's Happy Horse.

The product line is used by hunters and jumpers, pleasure horses, race and rodeo horses.

Among the other products in the line are Heal Salve Fortified, an ointment for scratches wounds, fungus and

heal cracks.

There also is BEP, an all-natural product to help with performance issues and coordination difficulties.

Subside is a pain reliever to help with joint pain and arthritis.

"We are committed and dedicated to making all of our products and using all natural ingredients with the highest quality herbs for the well-being of horses," Butcko says.

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