

# Horse Healers – The Whole Food Approach

An Interview with Marlene Eagleburger,  
THERA Cell Eq



Marlene Eagleburger and her Arabian

**EDITORS' NOTE** Marlene Eagleburger attended H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College (New Orleans) and joined the U.S. Foreign Service in 1962. She was assigned to Belgrade, Yugoslavia, where she met her husband, former U.S. Secretary of State Lawrence S. Eagleburger. After retiring from the State Department in 1993, Eagleburger and her family moved to Charlottesville, Virginia, where she became a partner in a world-renowned Holsteiner horse breeding venture, Far-A-Field Acres. With help from another horse expert, who had experience in the human health food market, Eagleburger founded THERA Cell Eq in 2006.

**COMPANY BRIEF** Thera Cell EQ ([www.theracelleq.com](http://www.theracelleq.com)) produces equine products that provide horses with the protein chaperones, enzymes, and whole food cofactors that are no longer present in commercial feed formulas and are not found in synthetic supplements. The products are designed to meet specific equine needs, created in 1.5-inch square bars to be given by hand or in feed. The company uses only organic raw material from all around the world – no molasses or refined sugar – and sprouted grains that are not genetically modified or engineered. Products are dehydrated, rather than cooked since heat over 115 to 120 degrees destroys essential enzymes.

**Will you give an overview of the history and development of THERA Cell Eq?**

A high-level dressage horse named Lionheart, suffering from chronic lameness, led the way to the birth of THERA Cell Eq. All the normal medications stopped working, and the vet said severing the nerves in his right front foot was the only way forward, which of course would mean he would be retired and could no longer compete. His owner, Tigger Montague, who had worked in the human health food area, looked for ways to help her horse. She ended up sprouting some specific grains and adding some specific fruit, from which she formed small bars that she then dehydrated. After being fed sprouted bars for a few months, Lionheart improved dramatically. Tigger and Lionheart went on to compete at the highest levels in the discipline of dressage. Tigger came to me, and with the input of four other horse friends, THERA Cell Eq came into being. Today, we have 14 different products, all addressing common horse problems.

**How did you settle on 14 specific products?**

We looked at all the common issues that horses have, and then we looked at how we could develop formulas that would address each of those issues. You can't just pop a vitamin supplement down a horse's throat. You have to figure out what kind of ailment you're dealing with and know that horses will eat the cure. That's how we ended up with 14 products: Ten of them are therapeutic and address specific issues, and four of them are daily supplements.

**Do you expect to add any new products to the line?**

At some point we are going to look at feed. It's not like in the old days, when the horse ate his oats. Nowadays, the feed is made by huge companies, and what they do is cook it. Every nutrient is baked out, then they spray it with vitamins, add some molasses, and there you have feed. Molasses increases the acidity of the blood PH and acidic blood PH becomes an environmental host for viruses.

We are a start-up company and we can only take on so much at this point. But eventually, that's what we would like to do, although it is somewhat daunting to go up against the big feed brands. However, we feel confident that our feeds would be more beneficial to horses than the feed products that are on the market today.

**Has your product been well received by the horse community?**

People are increasingly interested in the

idea of food as medicine. The people who are already incorporating these ideas into their own personal lives, eating organic food and so forth, are right onboard with us. Other people express an interest but don't know much about it. These are the ones we need to educate as to why whole food is the answer. It's not a hard sell, because of the increasing publicity about organic food. That makes our job a bit easier. It's quite remarkable how people's attitudes change after they get their first product. In a way, our message is that it's a lot better to eat an orange than take a vitamin C pill. In that sense, we're hopeful that we don't just help the horses; we also change people's attitudes toward nutrition in general.

**In building the business, is this a product you sell directly to owners or trainers?**

We take a diverse approach to our sales. Fortunately, since we're all horsemen, we know a lot of people in the horse business. Within the horse industry, it's all about word of mouth. I'm a horseperson and if I buy a product and it works, I'll tell 10 of my friends to try it. That's how we started, because we didn't even have our Web site up at the beginning. The response was very positive. Now that our Web site is up, it's making a big difference. Plus, we attend various big horse shows, in all disciplines.

**Is your Web site both informational and a sales tool?**

Yes. We use our Web site not just for sales, but also to explain the science of our products, so that if somebody wants to know the ingredients of a particular product, for instance, they can access that information online. They can find out why we're using a particular fruit, or why we're using a particular grain, and what it does. Some vets have tried our products and they are telling their clients whose horses have particular problems that our products work. That is extremely helpful.

**You evidently have a lot of passion for this product. Are you really enjoying it so much?**

I truly am, because I've learned so much with all the research we've had to do. When somebody sends an e-mail and tells us the turnaround her horse has made because she used our products, that's the greatest reward. That's not to say we don't have to make money in order to stay in business – that's a given. But the real rush is when we get the responses from our customers saying, "This is terrific." That is the true payoff. ●