

James Pickens Jr. Speaks out to Help Horses in New Public Service Campaign

The Grey's Anatomy actor hopes to raise awareness of proper veterinary care for horses

June 9, 2009

Actor, horse owner and competitive roper teams up with the American Quarter Horse Association and Fort Dodge Animal Health on national healthy horse campaign

When James Pickens Jr. lost his roping horse, "Smokey," it was devastating and brought home the importance of having all his horses seen by a veterinarian twice a year.

Now, Pickens has joined with the American Quarter Horse Association and Fort Dodge Animal Health in a national public awareness campaign called "Keeping Horses Healthy."

Pickens, an AQHA member and star of ABC's Grey's Anatomy, lends his celebrity power to the television and radio public service announcements. An American Quarter Horse owner and competitive roper, Pickens' love of horses led him to help educate other owners on the importance of twice-a-year wellness exams from a veterinarian.

The PSAs include three television and three radio spots that are 60, 30 and 15 seconds long. The PSA campaign is designed to let horse owners know about the health dangers their horses face.

"The health challenges faced by the nation's 9.2 million horses are many – from deadly mosquito-borne and respiratory diseases, to joint health and nutrition issues, injuries and infections," said AQHA Executive Vice President Don Treadway Jr. "Yet according to the American Veterinary Medical Association, nearly half of all horses won't see a veterinarian this year. Not surprisingly, equine health emergencies happen more often than they should and many are preventable."

Twice-yearly wellness exams help veterinarians detect, treat and prevent equine health problems before they result in emergencies or a prolonged setback. Exams are also the ideal time for veterinarians to educate horse owners about nutrition, behavior, emerging local disease threats and other horse health issues in the area.

The PSAs, and more information about equine health, can be found on the America's Healthy Horse Web site at www.americashealthyhorse.com.

Make a PSA of your own! Enter the AnimalNetwork PSA Contest.