

## Merial Sponsors Chincoteague Pony Herd

### **Ancient pony herd receives modern care with vaccinations and health care treatments**

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The Chincoteague pony herd is thought to be descended from animals aboard a wrecked 16th century Spanish ship, but today the herd is getting 21st century health care.

Again this year, the herd is receiving donated vaccinations and deworming products from Merial, including RECOMBITEK® Equine West Nile Virus vaccine, IMRAB® rabies vaccine and ZIMECTERIN® Gold (ivermectin/praziquantel). These products represent health care technology used by top equine competitors — but even wild ponies deserve the best.

“Merial is committed to providing high-quality equine health care products to every horse owner,” says Frank Hurtig, DVM, MBA, director, Merial Veterinary Services. “Every horse in the country deserves a health care program that includes protection against West Nile virus, rabies and critical parasites.”

The herd lives on Assateague Island, which spans the coast from Virginia to Maryland. About 50,000 visitors gather in Chincoteague, Va., every year to see the Virginia portion of the herd make a famous swim across the channel to the Virginian coast.

The herd is owned and managed by the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Department, which was incorporated in 1925 and obtained a federal grazing permit in 1946 for 150 ponies on the island. The annual swim has become an event where young foals from the herd are sold at auction to keep the herd down to its federal grazing limit.

To maintain the ponies' health year-round, the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Department firefighters and other volunteers visit Assateague Island in the spring and fall to vaccinate and deworm the horses with the help of local veterinarians.

“Since we've been deworming regularly, I've seen the overall appearance of the herd definitely improve over the years,” says Charlie Cameron, DVM, Eastern Shore Animal Hospital, a clinic that has worked with the wild horses since 1990. “Each person that purchases a horse at the sale receives a healthy pony and a little part of history.”