



Therapeutic benefits of CBD gain acceptance in the equestrian world.

Steffen Peters' endorsement of Trove LLC's CBD products may move the needle toward clarity in the confusing swirl of information surrounding the use of hemp-plant derived cannabidiol, aka "CBD." As the four-time Olympian shares on page 10, he began taking Trove's CBD in late January to help with extreme performance anxiety and has experienced remarkably positive results.

In Steffen's case, taking three, 25mg CBD Trove pills a day has calmed his mind enough to assert control of his thoughts and get close to "the old me" in and out of the saddle—without drowsiness or other negative side effects. In addition to calming, CBD is increasingly recognized for pain relief, anti-inflammatory properties and supporting the immune, digestive and musculoskeletal systems.

Like most therapeutic CBD products, Trove's are made from industrial hemp: harvests processed for fabrics, ropes, etc. This plant is in the same cannabis family as marijuana, but it's a different strain. It is cultivated for extremely low or non-existent levels of THC, (tetrahydrocannabinol), the cannabinoid compound that gives marijuana its psychoactive effect:

the “high” marijuana is known for.

The World Anti-Doping Association approved the use of CBD by human athletes by removing it from the 2018 prohibited substances list. THC, hashish and marijuana remain prohibited substances, so it's crucial that athletes find CBD products tested to be free of those compounds. CBD is not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration, so that can be a challenge. Time Magazine recently reported that only 34 percent of CBD products tested actually had the amount of CBD claimed on their labels.

The market of industrial hemp-based products has grown significantly since passage of the 2018 Farm Bill, which eased restrictions on harvesting the plant. Before passage, hemp was classified as a controlled substance by the federal government. (THC continues to be Schedule 1 narcotic per the Drug Enforcement Agency.)

The new freedom on industrial hemp growth will hopefully lead to more CBD testing, says Trove co-founder Deborah Carter. In the meantime, Trove and other responsible manufacturers have taken matters into their own hands. For Trove, that starts with sourcing 100 percent organic hemp with extraction and purification processes designed to ensure that CBD is the only cannabinoid compound in the end-product. Some of those compounds may have therapeutic benefits, Deborah explains, but lack of research on how they work in the body negates any possible enhancements those tiny amounts might deliver.

Trove's CBD is tested twice to be virtually free of THC and other compounds: First by the extraction company after processing, then by Trove as batches are made into capsules, oils and balms – for people, horses, dogs and cats. Concentrations are also verified and listed on labels, following FDA guidelines even though the agency does not currently regulate CBD. Deborah hopes such regulation is in the future. As the CBD industry grows rapidly, quality assurance is and will be increasingly important.

CBD for Horses

CBD is a prohibited substance per the FEI and United States Equestrian Federation because of its “reported anxiolytic” (anxiety reducing) effect. As of September 1 of this year, horses that test positive for natural cannabinoids, synthetic cannabinoids and other cannabimimetics will be considered in violation of USEF General Rule 4.

Nonetheless, its benefits for horses are gaining acceptance. “It’s become quite well known as effective and safe,” Deborah asserts of CBD’s relatively new use in horses. “And it doesn’t have the side effects that our conventional medications do.” The tranquilizer acepromazine and the analgesic, anti-inflammatory, butazolidin, are two examples of widely used equine medications with serious side effects.

Trove’s story began with Star, a 3-year-old Palomino filly with a severe and baffling neurological condition. It presented as involuntary and uncontrollable superficial muscle “fasciculations” that caused a “once affectionate filly to become a danger to herself and her caregivers,” Deborah explains.

Extensive efforts to diagnose and treat the problem failed. NSAIDs, prednisone, gabapentin, injections of vitamin B12 into acupuncture points and Regumate were among multi-week courses of treatment administered to no avail. After all that, Deborah tried CBD and says it’s been a literal life-saver for the now 4-year-old filly. “It was never our intention to start a company,” Deborah explains. “But the results with Star were so remarkable and occurred in such a short amount of time, I felt I had to do it.”

Deborah is a retired attorney, lifelong horsewoman and dressage rider. She’s known Steffen Peters for many years and trained with him periodically throughout that time. When she and Steffen began talking about CBD for his anxiety, she was happy to keep it confidential if that’s what he wanted.

“It was on the contrary,” she says. “He said, if people know that I have anxiety and can find ways to deal with it, maybe it will help other people.”

Steffen and Shannon Peters are known for taking meticulous care of their horses and themselves and part of that is being extremely careful about the products they use.

Deborah describes a big segment of the growing CBD industry as united in the effort to educate consumers and produce extensively-tested, high-quality, accurately-labeled products. Yet, “You can be deceived by some of the products that are out there,” she cautions. Purity, concentrations and dosages are areas where lack of regulation makes it hard for consumers to sort the good from the bad.

Steffen's endorsement of Trove LLC is likely to strongly influence equestrians as they consider adding CBD to their tool kit, whether for themselves or their non-showing horses, dogs and cats.