



**PRESS RELEASE**  
11 September 2009

## **EQUINE RESEARCH RECOGNISED IN 'THESIS OF THE YEAR' AWARD SHORTLIST**

The shortlist for the 2009 Eqvalan® Duo Equine Thesis of the Year Award has been announced today, 11th September 2009, representing the very best in equine related projects taking place in universities and colleges throughout the UK.

Now in its eleventh year, the award, sponsored by Merial Animal Health, is made by the Royal Agricultural Society of England each year to recognise outstanding academic achievement in the equestrian field and to showcase the best academic research to the equestrian industry.

Brian Warren, Chief Executive of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, comments: "The horse is taking an ever-more important role in rural Britain - as a leisure pursuit for many hundreds of thousands of people, in sport and for landowners who are diversifying their businesses by moving into livery and other horse related activities. This award is a great way of giving recognition to the future thought-leaders in the sector and we hope it also encourages other academic institutions and their students to continue in their valuable work."

The five shortlisted theses are:

- Holly Claridge, **Royal Veterinary College**: The 3D anatomy of the cervical articular process joint in the horse
- Ann Clausen, **Writtle College**: Analysis of the trait scoring data in Futurity Evaluations (2005-2008) for young sport horses
- Sarah Craighill, **Hadlow College**: An investigation to establish if there is a relationship between the orientation of the distal and middle phalanx and injury to the structures of the distal limb in the horse
- Becky Lee, **Bishop Burton College**: The Feasibility of Setting up an Equine Therapy Centre
- Sarah J Mitchell, **Sparsholt College**: A study into the behavioural and physiological effects of equine assisted therapy, as indicated by changes in Cortisol in saliva and heart rate

Shortlisted students will now have to defend their thesis to a panel of judges, including the editor of Horse & Rider magazine Alison Bridge, and the 2006 winner Rachel Kay. The winner, to be announced on Friday 13th November, will receive a cash prize, trophy and membership to the Royal Agricultural Society. They will also have the opportunity to present their thesis to the National Equine Forum in March.

Final day judge Dr Emma Batson from Merial Animal Health says: "Research and development is key to our business so it's very satisfying to see that the innovative spirit remains strong within the UK's academic institutions. The quality of entrants this year has been excellent and there is some very valuable work taking place that deserves a great deal of respect and recognition.

"We're looking forward to meeting the finalists, but I'm sure it's going to be a challenge to select an overall winner!"

**--ENDS--**

Notes to Editors:-

1. Press release issued by Julie Bublaitis, Marketing Assistant, Royal Agricultural Society of England  
Tel No: 02476 858 217      Email: [julieb@rase.org.uk](mailto:julieb@rase.org.uk)
2. The Royal Agricultural Society of England, play a leading role in the development of British agriculture and a vibrant rural economy through the uptake of good science, the promotion of best practice. [www.rase.org.uk](http://www.rase.org.uk)
3. Merial is the world's leading and most successful animal health company producing a wide range of pharmaceuticals and vaccines to keep livestock and pets healthy and productive.

An innovation-driven leader, Merial has the largest research & development investment in the animal health industry with seventeen research and development centres around the world. Merial is committed to developing pharmaceuticals and vaccines with the highest level of quality, safety and efficacy through an extensive network of sixteen manufacturing sites globally.

Headquartered in the UK, with operations based in the US, France, Latin America and Asia, Merial employs approximately 6,500 people, operates in more than 150 countries and generates sales in excess of 1.7 billion Euros. [www.merial.com](http://www.merial.com)