

# Human Product Chemistry Finds Its Way To Hooves

**Copper peptides have been used in cosmetic and medical products for years, and now they are also being put to use for hoof repairs**

*By Ron Perszewski*

**A** new, spray-on hoof repair product based on human health and skin care chemicals is being offered to the hoof-care industry.

Toe Grow from SBS Equine Products is said to promote faster healing and growth of cell-damaged hooves, hair and skin. The product contains copper peptides, which are microscopic proteins used in human health care and cosmetic products such as anti-aging skin creams, hair loss formulations, burn treatments, fingernail growth stimulators and organ transplant facilitators.

Richard Shakalis, an SBS co-founder and researcher, notes that proteins are the essential building blocks for human and animal tissue, including muscle, bone, hair, ligaments, tendons and fingernails (or in the case of horses, hooves). He says



**HEALING AND GROWTH NEEDED.** *Copper peptides combined with good nutrition can go a long way toward restoring damaged hooves, according to researchers with SBS Equine Products. They "switch on" the cells at the coronary band to draw the nutrition they need to refuel from the blood supply for faster healing and growth.*

peptides are identical to proteins in that they are composed of amino acids.

"Peptides are usually found inside cells in many forms and act as antibodies, hormones or cell function facilitators. Copper peptides are a specific type of peptide that has a copper ion attached to it and is found naturally in cells. In this form, copper peptides act as signals at the cellular level to 'switch on' cells in several significant ways," Shakalis says.

This is not the first time that SBS, based in Naples, Fla., has produced hoof-care products based on the technology behind human products. About 20 years ago, the company adapted the technology from human tooth bonding to produce hoof sealants, now marketed as Hoof Armor and Farrier's Hoof Sealant.

“Copper peptides act as signals at the cellular level to ‘switch on’ cells in several significant ways...”

### Similar Science

Shakalis says copper peptides are effective on horse's hooves because they stimulate the coronary band to produce a stronger, healthier hoof in the same way copper peptides activate the production of new human skin and hair.

Loren Pickart of Switzerland is credited with the discovery of copper peptides and their uses during the 1970s. Pickart studied the effect of copper peptides in skin remodeling and wound healing. He found that copper peptides act as powerful antioxidants that help protect damaged tissue from further harm and speed up healing.



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Today, copper peptides are used as ointments for burns, medicaments to help organ and tissue transplants and as salves for post-cancer irradiated skin. They also are commonly found in human cosmetic products such as anti-wrinkle creams and hair growth formulas.

The Center for Veterinary Medicine within the U.S. Food and Drug Administration does not list copper peptides as a class of regulated drugs, and the FDA does not impose any rules on cosmetic products intended for use on animals.

There is, however, evidence that copper peptides have proven their effectiveness in products produced for human use. For example, the MayoClinic.com site says in an October 2004 report: “Copper peptides enhance wound healing. They also stimulate production of collagen and may enhance the action of antioxidants. Some small studies show that copper peptides may modestly improve fine wrinkling, age spots and sun damage with no side effects.”

### Online Reports

Another product review site, [www.smartskinicare.com](http://www.smartskinicare.com), notes, “Copper

peptides have been particularly effective in healing wounds and skin lesions as well as some gastrointestinal conditions,” and it notes that the FDA has approved a copper peptide gel for the treatment of acute and chronic wounds and ulcers.

The report states that a distinctive feature of copper peptides is that they reduce scar tissue formation while stimulating normal skin remodeling.

Shakalis says, “We have seen the use of copper peptides go full circle. They were first used on horses only on an experimental basis with production of human treatments as the final result. Copper peptides were found to be very effective and beneficial for these horses, but no equine products were ever produced.”

Now such equine products are available, he says, adding, “We look to copper peptides, in conjunction with good nutrition, to help solve many chronic structural hoof problems. The copper peptides will wake up and switch on the cells of the coronary band to grow strong, healthy hoof as long as it has the proper building blocks of nutrition to refuel these critical cells.”



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