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'A Whole Different Animal': Topspin Buys Horse Arthritic Pain Co.

By Rimi Dutt

Deal-making in both the health-care and pet-care markets has remained relatively resilient in the recession, as these sectors are seen as more resistant to a downturn than, say, Beluga caviar makers. Now comes a buyout that marries both.

Topspin Partners LBO has bought a division of medical device maker Sanuwave Inc. whose products treat chronic pain and arthritis-related pain in a non-surgical setting, primarily in horses. The [VersaTron product line](#) uses sound waves to trigger an animal's own repair mechanisms, helping it to heal. It's been used on more than 250,000 animals.

Richard Effress, the chairman of Pulse Veterinary Technologies LLC, as the company is now known, said its therapy costs between \$700 and \$1,100, less than the \$2,500 to \$5,000 cost of surgical alternatives.

"[Pulse] is a whole different animal, so to speak," said Effress.



Courtesy Pulse Veterinary Technologies

The product has also been found to work on smaller animals like dogs, and Topspin and the company's new management hope to encourage more dog owners to use the product. It sees this as a big market.

"There are many more dogs in the country than horses," said Leigh Randall, managing director at Topspin Partners.

But the company is ignoring cats, simply because the more flexible felines don't typically suffer from such health problems.

"They don't have have the same degree of these (musco-skeletal) problems," Effress said. "They're more resilient."