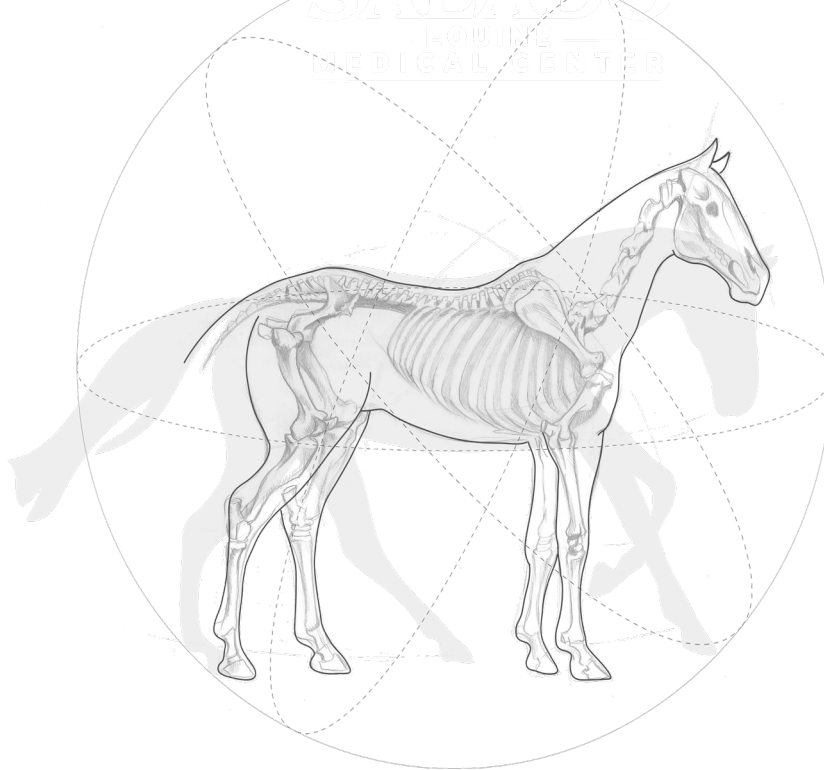




PRESS RELEASE

A milestone in the history of equine medicine:
**ROOD & RIDDLE, THE MOST RENOWNED
EQUINE HOSPITAL IN THE UNITED STATES,
JOINS EQUINE CARE GROUP**

Lummen, Belgium - Lexington, Kentucky - Saratoga Springs, New York - Wellington, Florida, USA
September 9, 2026

Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital (RREH), the largest privately owned equine hospital in the United States, has agreed to join **Equine Care Group (ECG)**, the international network of equine veterinarians, specialized equine hospitals, and animal health experts **founded in Belgium** by equine surgeon **Dr. Tom Mariën** and elite sport horse veterinarian **Dr. Frederik Bruyninx**. Following completion, the two organizations will combine their expertise **to further advance equine medicine worldwide** through **closer collaboration** in patient care, **scientific research, innovation, and education**. The financial terms of the agreement will not be disclosed. **The parties have signed a partnership agreement**. The transaction is expected to close in the coming weeks, subject to the completion of customary legal documentation, required regulatory filings and approvals, and other customary closing conditions.

EQUINE CARE GROUP

PRESS RELEASE

A milestone in the history of equine medicine: Rood & Riddle, the most renowned equine hospital in the United States, joins Equine Care Group

For decades, **Europe** looked to the **United States** for the **latest knowledge, techniques, and innovations in equine medicine**. Today, this exchange is increasingly mutual. **Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital**, one of the most renowned equine hospitals in the world, has chosen to join a **network that originated in Belgium**. This represents an exceptional recognition of **Equine Care Group** and **Equitom**, as well as of **Belgian equine medicine**, which over the past several decades has **developed into an international benchmark**.

Debbie Spike, CEO of Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital:

*"This partnership brings together two organizations that **share the same vision: advancing equine medicine worldwide through collaboration, innovation, and knowledge sharing**. Once the partnership is completed, **Rood & Riddle** will work closely with the veterinarians and hospitals within **Equine Care Group** to further **accelerate research, education, and medical innovation**. One goal will always remain at the center of everything we do: **providing horses with the best possible care**."*

*What also strongly appealed to us is the integrated model behind **Equine Care Group**. **ECG** brings together not only **equine hospitals and ambulatory veterinarians**, but also **fertility centers, laboratories, nutrition specialists, and research and education centers**. This allows us to approach equine health in its full scope: from prevention and nutrition to diagnostics, treatment, reproduction, research, and education."*

*This integrated approach sets **ECG** apart internationally and was an important factor in our decision to enter this partnership."*

Over the years, **Rood & Riddle** has been approached numerous times by financial investors and other parties, but we were looking for a partner that understands what it takes to practice medicine at the highest level and that keeps medical direction in the hands of veterinarians. We found that model in **Equine Care Group: an organization founded by veterinarians, for veterinarians**, that connects leading specialists across borders and invests for the long term in people, research, and infrastructure. **Together, we are writing a new chapter in the history of equine medicine and helping shape its future."**



Dr. Tom Mariën, co-founder and CEO of Equine Care Group:

*"When **Equitom** was approached about an acquisition in 2018, one thing was clear to me: **the medical direction of a hospital must be determined by veterinarians**. That conviction led us to build **Equine Care Group** together with partners who share that principle and invest for the long term. Not as a traditional veterinary chain, but **as an international network in which medical quality, innovation, and the health of the horse come first**."*

***Rood & Riddle's** decision to join this network today is **deeply meaningful** to me. It is one of the organizations that shaped and inspired me as a young surgeon. To now join forces is one of the most rewarding moments of my career."*

*But the truly historic step is **the unprecedented combination of complementary knowledge and expertise**. Two international leaders in equine medicine will bring decades of experience, innovation, and clinical insight together within one network. This unique knowledge base will accelerate the advancement of equine medicine and **help provide even better care for horses around the world. That is the true significance of this partnership."***

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Dr. Frederik Bruyninx, co-founder of Equine Care Group and official veterinarian of the Belgian show jumping team:

*"Through my work as the **official veterinarian of the Belgian show jumping team** at international championships, I see how frequently sport horses travel between Europe and the United States. That is precisely why **close collaboration between veterinarians** on both sides of the Atlantic is so important. When we can quickly **share medical information, experience, and expertise**, horses can receive **better continuity of care** wherever they are in the world. This not only benefits their health and welfare, but also **strengthens international equestrian sport as a whole**.*

*The partnership with **Rood & Riddle** is also of **major strategic importance**. **Rood & Riddle** is an **undisputed reference in the United States**. Its decision to join **Equine Care Group** sends a powerful signal to the American equine veterinary community. I am convinced that **this will open the door to new collaborations with other leading U.S. veterinarians, hospitals, and animal health professionals**, and will significantly accelerate the further **growth of Equine Care Group in the United States**."*

A STORY COMING FULL CIRCLE

This partnership has a very special meaning for Dr. Tom Mariën, founder of Equitom and CEO of Equine Care Group:

*"In the late 1990s, as a young surgeon, I had the opportunity to meet **Professor Steve Reed** during an externship at The **Ohio State University**. He encouraged me to visit **Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital**, which was already the benchmark for equine medicine in the **United States**. At that time, the United States was ahead of Europe in many areas. **My time at Rood & Riddle was eye-opening**. I was introduced to new surgical techniques, an exceptionally efficient organization, and **above all, a culture in which innovation, research, excellence, and teamwork were central**.*

*When I returned to **Belgium**, that experience inspired me to create my own '**Rood & Riddle**': **Equitom**. That constant drive for innovation and excellence became part of **Equitom's DNA** and remains the engine behind our development today. Nearly three decades later, I now see **Equitom and Rood & Riddle joining forces within Equine Care Group**. It goes beyond anything I could ever have dreamed of. **Together, we want to accelerate innovation, strengthen research, train the next generation of veterinarians, and continue raising the standard of equine medicine internationally**.*

*Two exceptional institutions in our field, separated by an ocean for decades yet continually inspired by one another, are will come together within a single network. **For me, this may be the most special moment of my career**."*

— Dr. Tom Mariën

PRESS RELEASE

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A VETERINARIAN-LED PARTNERSHIP

The veterinary sector is rapidly professionalizing and consolidating. For **Equine Care Group**, one principle is non-negotiable: **medical decisions, long-term investments, and professional autonomy must remain first and foremost in the hands of veterinarians**. ECG has therefore deliberately chosen a model in which entrepreneurship and financial strength serve medicine, not the other way around.

- **Equine Care Group was founded and is led by veterinarians**, with medical quality as its starting point.
- **ECG is not a traditional veterinary chain, but an international network bringing together leading hospitals, veterinarians and expertise across equine healthcare**, while preserving the identity and expertise of each member.
- The network **promotes collaboration, knowledge sharing, research, and innovation** across disciplines and borders.
- Partners **retain their autonomy and culture** while gaining access to an international network of specialists who share the same values and ambitions.
- **ECG makes sustained reinvestments in medicine, teams, research, infrastructure, innovation, and the education** of the next generation of veterinarians.
- **Rood & Riddle joining Equine Care Group marks an important step for the profession**. For the first time, two leading veterinary organizations on opposite sides of the Atlantic will structurally **combine their expertise in research, education, innovation, and medical excellence**.



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WHAT THIS PARTNERSHIP DELIVERS

For horses and their owners

- **Access to an international network** of leading specialists and equine hospitals across Europe, the United States, Latin America, and other regions.
- **Rapid exchange of knowledge**, innovations, new surgical techniques, and best practices, allowing horses everywhere to benefit from the most advanced care.
- **Continuity of care from Rood & Riddle's trusted teams**, strengthened by an international network of specialists collaborating across borders every day.

For veterinarians and the future of the profession

- **A unique environment for continuous knowledge exchange**, international collaboration, and advanced specialization among leading referral centers.
- **New opportunities** for research, education, residency programs, mentorship, and innovation across every discipline: surgery, orthopedics, internal medicine, diagnostic imaging, reproduction, sports medicine, regenerative therapies, rehabilitation, nutrition, preventive medicine, and more.
- **A model created by veterinarians, for veterinarians**, that protects professional autonomy, supports talent development, and contributes to a healthier work-life balance.

For the future of equine medicine

- This partnership connects Europe and the United States around **one clear ambition**: to accelerate innovation, push the boundaries of equine medicine, and together continue raising international standards of care.



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TWO COUNTRIES, TWO CULTURES, ONE CALLING

Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital and **Equine Care Group** have different histories and grew on opposite sides of the Atlantic. Yet they share **the same fundamental beliefs**.

What unites them is a **passion for the horse**, a **drive for medical excellence**, and the conviction that the **future of equine medicine** should be shaped, to a significant degree, **by veterinarians themselves**.

Rood & Riddle was founded in 1986 in **Lexington, Kentucky**, and grew to become the **benchmark for equine medicine in the United States**, with hospitals in **Kentucky, Florida, and New York**. **Equitom** was founded in 2001 in **Lummen, Belgium**, and developed into one of **Europe's leading equine hospitals**, with locations in **Lummen and Namur**.

Today, those stories come together. **The partnership will unite hundreds of veterinarians and experts** who will combine their knowledge and expertise across borders.

Within Equine Care Group, equine hospitals, ambulatory veterinarians, nutrition specialists, fertility specialists, laboratories, and other animal health professionals are working ever more closely together. **The result is an integrated network centered on knowledge sharing, innovation, and the health of the horse.**



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ABOUT EQUINE CARE GROUP:

Equine Care Group (ECG) was founded in 2021 by equine surgeon **Dr. Tom Mariën** and **Dr. Frederik Bruyninx**, official veterinarian of the Belgian show jumping team. **ECG is an international network of equine veterinarians, specialized hospitals, and animal health experts** dedicated to advancing equine medicine through collaboration, innovation, and knowledge sharing. The group treats more than **50,000 horses** each year for clients from **over 70 countries**.

Today, **ECG brings together** equine hospitals, ambulatory practices, diagnostic centers, laboratories, fertility centers, and research and education centers across **Europe, the United States**, and beyond.

The model was built by veterinarians, for veterinarians. **ECG connects leading hospitals and specialists worldwide** and combines medical expertise with research, innovation, prevention, nutrition, and education.

ECG's Mission

- **To advance equine medicine** worldwide through international collaboration, scientific research, innovation, and continuous knowledge exchange.
- To place greater emphasis on **preventive medicine** by **investing in nutrition**, nutritional supplements, **research**, and **innovation**, helping prevent disease and, wherever possible, avoid major treatments or surgical procedures.
- **To further professionalize the equine veterinary profession** and make it more attractive by investing in better organization, education, mentorship, talent development, and a healthy work-life balance.
- With this vision, **Equine Care Group** aims to become **the leading international network in equine medicine**, where top specialists collaborate across borders to provide horses with the best possible care and help shape the future of the profession.

Contact Information

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PRESS RELEASE

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ABOUT ROOD & RIDDLE EQUINE HOSPITAL (RREH):

Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital (RREH) was founded in 1986 in Lexington, Kentucky, by **Dr. Bill Rood** and **Dr. Tom Riddle**. Today, it is widely regarded as **the largest privately owned equine hospital in the United States** and one of the **most renowned equine hospitals in the world**.

With more than **500 employees**, **three state-of-the-art equine hospitals**, and an extensive network of ambulatory veterinarians, **Rood & Riddle** ranks among the largest and most prominent organizations in international equine medicine. Its team treats **tens of thousands of horses each year**. From its hospitals in **Lexington, Kentucky**; **Saratoga Springs, New York**; and **Wellington, Florida**, **Rood & Riddle** provides highly specialized veterinary care to horses from across the United States and far beyond.

The Lexington hospital has an exceptional global reputation for its **expertise in Thoroughbred racehorses**. At the same time, the three hospitals care for a wide range of horses, including show jumpers, dressage and eventing horses, Quarter Horses, breeding stock, and recreational horses.

In addition to clinical care, Rood & Riddle has played a **leading role** for nearly four decades in **scientific research, veterinary education, residency programs**, and the **development of new diagnostic and surgical techniques**. In doing so, the organization actively contributes to the continued advancement of equine medicine worldwide.

Areas of Expertise

- Surgery
- Internal medicine
- Advanced diagnostic imaging (MRI, CT, scintigraphy, ultrasound, etc.)
- Sport horse medicine
- Reproduction
- Dentistry
- Neonatology
- Podiatry and farriery
- Veterinary diagnostic laboratory
- Veterinary pharmacy
- Ambulatory veterinary care

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ABOUT EQUITOM:

Equitom was founded in 2001 by Dr. Tom Mariën in Lummen, Belgium, and has grown into the **largest** and one of the **most innovative equine hospitals in Europe**. From its locations in **Lummen** and **Namur**, Equitom treats more than **10,000 horses** each year from over **70 countries**. The hospital is internationally **recognized for its expertise in surgery, diagnostic imaging, orthopedics, internal medicine, sports medicine, regenerative therapies, research, and innovation**.

Equitom is also the **headquarters and medical heart of Equine Care Group (ECG)**, where specialists collaborate across borders on innovation, research, education, and knowledge sharing.

Key Milestones

- **2001** Equitom is founded by **Dr. Tom Mariën** following a period of advanced training in the United States.
- **2014** First **major expansion** of the Lummen campus.
- **2017** Opening of a new **4,000 m²** (approximately 43,000 sq. ft.) **building** dedicated entirely to **orthopedics, rehabilitation, and recovery**.
- **2021** Installation of **Europe's first robotic CT scanner for horses** and **founding of Equine Care Group**.
- **2023** **Opening of Equitom Namur and further expansion of Equitom Lummen:**
 - Opening of **Equitom Namur**, an entirely new, purpose-built equine hospital in Wallonia, further expanding Equitom's presence and specialized equine care in Belgium.
 - In Lummen, a **new 2,500 m²** (approximately 27,000 sq. ft.) **expansion** opens, including a **fully glass-enclosed, digitally connected operating room** which is unique in the world of equine medicine.
 - With this expansion, Equitom Lummen's hospitalization capacity increases to **150 horses**

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