

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Agriculture and Environment Committee](#)
Subject: Research Director Agriculture and Environment Committee Hendra vaccine enquiry
Date: Sunday, 27 March 2016 9:43:17 AM

Dear Committee

It is well recognised that the Hendra virus is a deadly zoonotic disease and that prevention of this disease is simple.

I believe that all horses that live in or visit the affected geographical zone of disease spread should be vaccinated and because of the seriousness of this disease, this vaccination program should not be left up to individual horse owners to decide upon. It is in the public interest from a human health point of view for the government to both mandate Hendra vaccination for all horses and to financially support horse owners in this endeavour by subsidising the cost of the vaccine. This action would also assist in the promotion of all Queensland sports horse activities which makes good economic sense. Whilst many horse owners quote the fear of side effects for their reluctance to vaccinate their horses, many hesitate because they find the cost prohibitive. The former concern can be addressed with an education program but the latter requires a government subsidy until market forces reduce the cost of the vaccine.

My interest in this topic arises because I own three horses all of whom are fully vaccinated. I completely support the decision of many veterinarians to refuse to attend sick, unvaccinated horses. The protective clothing they are otherwise required to wear exposes the wearer to the risk of heat stroke in summer, is cumbersome and instills fear in horses, which handicaps the vet's ability to treat the horse and increases the danger of being hurt by an animal that is not only sick but thrashing around in its efforts to escape what it fears. The potential for any vet to be injured or to contract the disease makes the decision to refuse to attend unvaccinated horses absolutely rational, despite the heavy toll this may have on their client base. I believe the government could better support our veterinarian community by including in the legislation penalties on owners who call vets to at risk horses, rather than placing the penalty on the vets who attend, as is currently the case. The onus of responsibility should be on those who own horses rather than on those who attend them.

If a widespread mandatory Hendra vaccination program becomes legislated Queensland will lead the way in equine biosecurity and be a role model for other relevant governments, in this case NSW, to follow suite.

Regards

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