

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Agriculture and Environment Committee](#)
Subject: Hendra vaccine inquiry
Date: Wednesday, 13 April 2016 1:45:22 PM

Dear sir/madam,

After many, many hours research on the known facts of Hendra virus and vaccine I made what I consider to be an informed choice to not vaccinate my horses but to employ management and hygiene procedures as outlined by DAF. As time goes on and horses seem to be having varied problems after vaccination, I'm literally fearful of having to vaccinate them with the Hendra vaccine.

I know there are people working on a submission listing the data, reports and problems with the whole issue, so I will use this submission to outline how it affects me personally. Please note I do vaccinate for tetanus/strangles even though they rarely leave the property, and my dogs and myself are also vaccinated with the usual vaccines.

I have three horses, one is a 32 year old gelding who I've had for 23 years, he has age related problems and the vaccine has never been recommended for horses with underlying problems. I just about never have need for a vet, but now in his old age I may not be able to get one to treat him when he's likely to need it most. It's very distressing for me, especially the no vacc/no treat policy some vets have adopted.

Second horse is a 23 year old mare who has just been given to me, she's had little care for many years, I've no idea yet of the exact status of her health, she does get QLD itch, which is an underlying condition, and her hooves aren't in the best shape, so laminitis is a concern. Again by manufacturers recommendation she should not be given this vaccine.

Third horse is a 5 year old gelding, he was adopted from a rescue about a year ago after having the initial 2 injections, he's a lovely natured horse but at first he was very aggressive at times. I chose not to continue his Hendra vaccinations and he's back to being a lovely natured horse showing no signs of the aggression he initially did.

The virus is rare and fragile, has probably been in the ecosystem for many thousands of years, since its discovery many people have been in contact with infected horses, and a large number in high risk contact who have not been infected. Unfortunately the few who have been infected most likely wouldn't have if they'd used even basic protection.

As no Govt Dept I'm aware of differentiates between vaccinated or not vaccinated horses in their procedures it's alarming to me how many people don't realise that no vaccine works in 100% of cases, so precautions must be taken with all horses. Even now there are still vets

who fail to pull on so much as a pair of gloves when treating animals, even unknown animals from the sales.

I feel there's a golden opportunity being wasted here, everyone, not just vets, would benefit from increasing protection procedures when handling animals, but that opportunity is being lost in the push to market a vaccine that may or may not protect your horse, you or your vet. If a virus emerges that is highly contagious and in a species not so easily contained, we would be that much better prepared. I've lost a lot of faith and trust in the veterinary profession in the last few years, the fear mongering and misconceptions being cast about in the media by some are ridiculous, and has brought to light a lot of issues that have previously gone largely undetected or unnoticed.

There are many unknowns and unanswered questions, yet doesn't seem to be any ongoing research or trials. It took 8 years to create and get the vaccine onto the market, yet in nearly four years there's insufficient data to lengthen the vaccination schedule from 6 to 12 months. Dr Middleton from CSIRO initially said her studies showed it was likely horses would only need a two injection course and possibly a 6 monthly booster after, to gain lifetime immunity. There are too many incidences of previously healthy horses suffering health problems after being given this vaccine to all be considered coincidences. I personally know of two who contracted laminitis shortly after being given the Hendra vaccine and have heard of many more.

Horse owners have been put between a rock and a hard place, and while many have had no serious reactions in their horses, there's no telling what the effects will be long term.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely

Sharon Wheatley

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