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15 April 2016

The Agriculture and Environment Committee Hendra Vaccine Inquiry
C/- Mr Rob Hansen
Parliament House
Brisbane
Queensland 4000
Phone: 07 3553 6660

By email: robert.hansen@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Hansen,

RE: Veterinarian Submission to Hendra virus Vaccine Inquiry

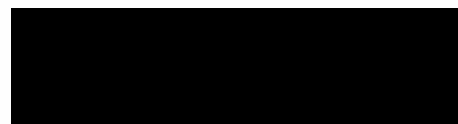
My name is Dr Peter Lynch, and I am an equine veterinarian located at Toowoomba, Queensland. I have been in veterinary practice for 45 years. I am a full time locum Veterinarian and work in mixed practices from Kuranda to Boonah and west to Muttaborra for the last 6 years.

Although I have not personally seen a case of Hendra Virus Disease, I have worked in two practices that have had confirmed cases of Hendra Disease. Consequently, I am acutely aware of the risk of Hendra Disease in horses and humans. As a Veterinarian dealing with any zoonotic disease, I am responsible for the health and welfare of the animals, their owners and contacts, and attending Veterinary personnel.

I wish to address the following Terms of Reference in the Qld Parliament's Hendra virus Vaccine Inquiry:

- The incidence and impact of adverse reactions by horses following vaccination and the reporting of adverse reactions and economic impacts of the Hendra vaccine.
- The development, trials and approval processes of the vaccine
- Who bears the risks of HeV infection and who incurs the costs and receives the benefits from each risk mitigation option.

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As a veterinary practitioner, I have vaccinated several hundred horses. Reactions to vaccination have been extremely rare. All have resolved in a day or two, and in most cases they have passed without any medical intervention. The most common reaction I have seen has been a stiff neck for a day or so. This has been no worse than the reactions we humans experience after a Tetanus vaccination. This reaction is an indication that the body's immune system is responding to the vaccine. Any vaccine requires the immune system to respond or it will not work.

In my experience the vaccine is extremely safe and effective. THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A CASE OF HENDRA DISEASE IN A VACCINATED HORSE. I am aware of all the reported deaths after vaccination. All those that have been examined have concluded that the mortality has not been caused by the vaccine. In some cases, the death was caused by an unrelated, pre-existing medical condition. One mare that aborted that I investigated was running in a paddock under Hairy Caterpillar nests.

Vaccination of horses is essential for the safety of the horse, its owner and any employees that they have, and any contacts such as the farrier or Veterinary practitioner and staff. Workplace Health and Safety regulations are now making it extremely difficult for practitioners to attend to unvaccinated horses. Many practices I work in now have policies that they will only see vaccinated horses, or unvaccinated horses are only seen in full PPE. This can add hundreds of dollars to the cost of treating unvaccinated horses.

All equestrian events must become fully vaccinated. It is impossible to keep members of the public away from the horses. Hendra Virus infected horses will shed the virus for three or four days before they become sick. The owners of such horses could unwittingly take their horse to a public event during this period of time. I think it is unlikely that their Public Liability Insurance would cover them if a Hendra Disease event occurred.

I urge your committee to back the excellent science behind the vaccine and the expertise of the AVPMA.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]
P J Lynch BVSc MACVSc

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