

## **SUBMISSION FOR QLD GOVT HENDRA VACCINE ENQUIRY**

I would like to make a submission regarding the Hendra Vaccine use in horses.

All my horses have been vaccinated since the inception and subsequent release of HeV in 2012. None of my horses have reacted to the above vaccine in any way. They have been of different ages [from 2yrs to 30yrs] and breeds [ Mini Shetland to Percherons]. The incidence of reactions is no more than any other vaccine on the market.

This vaccine has given me, my family and friends peace of mind that we are all protected, including my beautiful horses against a deadly and frightening virus.

I agree with veterinarians who choose not to treat unvaccinated horses. There has been an uninformed and ignorant scare campaign by parties that generally have no veterinary or medical training.

I feel that the cost of the vaccine should not be a major factor to horse owners. If you are feeding, worming, providing regular hoof care and dentals, vaccinating your horse against Tetanus and Strangles, the cost of this vaccine is minor, in the overall care and husbandry a horse requires. It is more important to provide an attending veterinarian a safe workplace to conduct his or her business, and provide a safe home environment for your family, friends and equines.

It has been made virtually impossible for veterinarians to attend horses that are unvaccinated, due to the legal issues that have been raised from WH and S legal action. A veterinarian can prepare him or herself and the owner of the horse against potential infection by wearing PPE and following guidelines in accordance to Workplace health, safety and hygiene. However, when a veterinarian is responsible for all people that may come in contact with the ill horse until exclusion testing has ruled out the possibility of Hendra Virus, how can attending an unvaccinated sick horse be viable.

It is widely known and accepted that the virus can shed and be transmitted before any symptoms are noticeable. It is my opinion that people who own horses and choose not to vaccinate are negligent. There is no excuse not to utilise a vaccine that has been tested and proven to prevent a deadly virus. If I or any member of my family were to be infected by an unvaccinated horse at an event or competition, I would personally take legal action against the owner of the horse as they have a duty of care to both their horse and anyone who comes in contact with it.

Even though there has not been a recent outbreak of Hendra Virus in Qld, it still exists and could emerge again at any time. The consequence of a veterinarian contracting this virus is potential death or severe illness. This outcome would be an extreme impact on the attending veterinarian, their family and friends. The virus is preventable with the donning of PPE and provision of PPE to the horse owner, but as the virus is undetectable until symptoms are shown, a veterinarian attending an unvaccinated horse at any time, even for routine matters, could be at risk. As the symptoms are so variable, how can a veterinarian possibly attend any unvaccinated horse without an element of risk.

If you own a horse and are a responsible horse owner then vaccinate against HeV. There is no excuse. If a veterinarian will not attend your horse because you choose not to vaccinate then you must be prepared for the consequence of your inaction.

Signed

Emily Baxter

Horse owner

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[REDACTED] Kenilworth Qld 4574