

Submission to the Queensland Parliament Hendra Vaccine Inquiry

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Victoria Point
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The Agriculture and Environment Committee Hendra Virus Inquiry
C/- Mr Rob Hansen
Parliament House
Brisbane Qld 4001

Dear Mr Hansen,

I graduated as a veterinarian in the year 2000 from the University of Qld. I have worked in Australia and the UK. I worked at Redlands Veterinary Clinic during the time of the hendra virus outbreak in 2007 and witnessed first hand the devastating effects of the virus in horses and people. I currently work at All Horses Veterinary Services, Carbrook, Qld. During my time working at this practice I have been involved in a further 2 outbreaks of hendra virus in horses.

All Horses Vet Services is a busy equine ambulatory practice. I have vaccinated approximately 1000 horses against hendra virus. A lot of these horses I have vaccinated multiple times since the vaccine was made available. The overwhelming majority of horses I vaccinate have had no reported adverse reactions from this process.

The reactions that have been reported to me as a result of vaccination have included mild swelling at the injection site (20-30 occasions), mild short lived cough (2 occasions), performance issues (1 occasion), colic symptoms (1 occasion) and reports of horses just 'being a bit off' for a day (50 occasions). I have returned on only two occasions to horses to give a veterinary assessment post vaccination. I have vaccinated the same horse after they have previously suffered from a swollen neck and they have not had the same issue again.

My stance on vaccination and how it relates to our health and safety obligations stems from the following:

(a) Section 19 (2) of the Queensland Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011 states that " A person conducting a business or undertaking must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the health and safety of other persons is not put at risk from work carried out as part of the conduct of the business or undertaking."

(b) The new 'general biosecurity obligation' taking effect in July 2016 suggests the public must take all reasonable steps to ensure they do not spread a pest, disease or contaminant. This including Hendra virus.

(c) My experience as a equine veterinary practitioner.

(d) My experience with the disease in both people and horses.

(e) My extensive discussions with clients and veterinary practitioners

(f) My thoughts around what is 'reasonably practicable' when considering working in Queensland, working with large animals, working with clients and other personnel untrained in biosecurity.

(g) The fact that hendra virus can be spread to humans via horse secretions 2 weeks prior to showing signs of the disease

By ensuring horses are vaccinated against hendra virus, protection from the disease can be optimised for both horses and people. As a human, and a veterinarian I believe avoiding a disease that is potentially preventable with vaccination is common sense and our obligation.

As a veterinarian we are faced with sick horses and emotional clientele. It is **unavoidable** that by the time we arrive to treat a sick horse or a healthy horse for that matter, the clients have already had exposure to the horse and exposure to their secretions, which may carry hendra virus. The **only** way to mitigate this risk is with vaccination. Once we arrive at a property then we then have a duty to further reduce risk of injury or disease.

I believe by vaccinating horses we are reducing health and safety risks for people in contact with horses at all times.

Yours faithfully,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Craig Simon.

Craig Simon