



SCONE EQUINE HOSPITAL

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21st 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 Catherine Russell, and I am a specialist veterinarian in equine medicine located at Scone, NSW. I have been in veterinary practice for 21 years. 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.

Although I am not in general practice and hence not vaccinating many horses my practice has vaccinated a large number of horses without any adverse reactions. I personally have vaccinated my own 10 horses without any reactions and will continue to do so.

I believe the Hendra virus vaccine to be extremely safe and reliable. It is a vaccination we are very lucky to have available to us and is one of the better vaccinations that is currently in use for all diseases of horses. It rates on a par with the tetanus vaccination, a tried and true vaccine that has been the corner stone of preventative medicine for many years in equine practice.

As a veterinarian accepting horses to a hospital situation I will not accept any horses from Queensland or North Coast New South Wales that are not vaccinated. We have a large staff of nurses and vets, both junior and senior that we will not risk with horses that are not vaccinated and at risk of having Hendra Virus. This policy has meant that at least 1 horse, which has recently travelled from these at risk areas, has died as it has been unable to receive appropriate veterinary treatment while awaiting negative exclusion for Hendra virus. If the horses were vaccinated they would have been accepted to the hospital immediately and had a much greater chance of being saved. Workplace Health and safety is very important to us and we feel the Hendra vaccination is a vital part of providing this for our staff.

Although I would ideally like to work in a University referral clinic I would never apply to one in Queensland until Hendra vaccination is more accepted and widespread in the equine community. The risk to my staff and self would be too great and I commend the veterinarians who are currently working under the onerous and difficult conditions put upon them by this deadly disease that could be so much safer if wide spread vaccination was accepted.

Yours Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Catherine Russell BVSc FACVS
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Clovelly Intensive Care Unit
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