

Mrs Caiwen Cusworth
[REDACTED]

Kooralbyn, QLD, 4285
[REDACTED]

19th of April 2016

Submission – QLD Parliament Hendra Vaccine Inquiry

I am a horse owner and also work in the equine industry in administration at an Equine veterinary hospital. As soon as the vaccine came out in late 2012 I had my horse vaccinated. I have owned 4 horses during this period which have all been Hendra vaccinated and have never had any reactions. The clinic that I work for have administered over 6000 doses of the Hendra vaccine and we have not had a lot of reported reactions. Any reactions have mostly been very minor (e.g. swelling at injection site, slightly increased temperature and lethargic for 12-24 hours). We have seen more reactions from penicillin injections, Equivac Tetanus and Strangles vaccination.

I Hendra vaccinated my horses to give myself peace of my mind so if one of my horses does become unwell, my children, husband, myself and any others (vet, farrier or members of the general public) cannot potentially contract the Hendra virus from coming into contact with my horse. I would much rather risk my horse having a mild vaccine reaction, than becoming unwell and not being able to receive treatment and suffering whilst waiting on negative Hendra results. Or worse contracting the Hendra virus and passing it on to a family member or anyone else.

In regards to cost, I personally do not see it as an excessive cost. Owning horses is expensive. They are not a cheap animal to own. The Hendra vaccine is not much more expensive than other vaccines and it is not as much of an ongoing cost (eg. farrier, dental costs, etc.). It is most certainly cheaper than a lot of competition entry and stabling fees. I do believe when the booster doses are officially changed to annually there will be a better uptake of the vaccine, as a lot of people are worried about over vaccinating their horses and the ongoing cost of the vaccine.

From a work perspective it certainly makes things a lot easier for our busy equine vets when attending sick horses that are Hendra vaccinated, as they can commence more invasive treatment straight away (drenching, admitted for hospitalisation, surgery) without having to wait to receive negative blood results back from the government lab. It also gives our clients that do vaccinate their horse peace of mind that their horses can be treated quickly. If horses become unwell and are not vaccinated, then the vets will suit up in PPE, take blood & nasal samples and provide basic pain relief. The bloods get sent to the Bio Security Lab in Brisbane at Coopers Plains, this lab is only open Monday – Friday (closed on weekends and public holidays) and only runs one test run a day at 2pm. Too bad if the horse becomes unwell Friday evening or Saturday and then has to wait until Monday evening to get its results back. Due to a lot of other equine vets in the area now refusing to attend unvaccinated horses, it keeps our already busy equine vets even busier with having to attend all these extra horses because no other vet will attend.

I would continue vaccinating my own horses with the Hendra vaccine, even if one of my horses were to have a reaction in the future, because I believe it is the responsibility of the horse owner to minimise the risk of my own horses contracting the Hendra virus and possibly risking human life.

Yours sincerely
[REDACTED]

Caiwen Cusworth