

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](mailto:robert.hansen@parliament.qld.gov.au)

21 April 2016

Dear Mr Hansen,

**RE: Veterinarian Submission to Hendra virus Vaccine Inquiry**

My name is Dr Jenna Poppitt. I am an equine veterinarian who has worked in South East Queensland for the past 6 years. During this time, I have administered thousands of doses of the vaccine. I have also attended to hundreds of sick horses in need of veterinary treatment.

Less than 1% of horses have reacted and reactions have been minor and not life threatening. The reactions are no different to any other vaccine reaction in any species and frequency is less than seen with tetanus vaccination. Most reactions do not require veterinary intervention and owners can often manage them easily with pain killers and monitoring. I can count on one hand the number of horses I have had to attend because they have reacted to the vaccine and they all responded well to treatment.

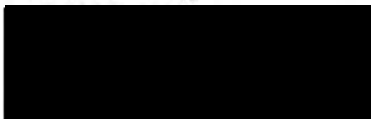
I frequently attend horses who are sick and in need of urgent veterinary treatment. The majority of these horses have symptoms that could be attributable to infection with Hendra Virus, as symptoms of the virus early in the course are non specific. The only way I know if the horse doesn't have Hendra Virus is if it has been vaccinated and is up to date.

In these cases, life saving treatment can be administered and there is no doubt in my mind that the vaccination saves horses lives not just through preventing Hendra virus but enabling veterinarians to administer life saving treatment to sick horses without risk of exposing themselves or owners to a deadly virus. There is no way I can do the same for a horse that is not vaccinated; every treatment I give is either invasive (e.g. injections, nasogastric intubation, intravenous fluids) or involves contact with the horses body fluids (e.g. oral medication).

Furthermore, it is against current veterinary legislation and my own professional ethical standard for me to attend a sick horse and provide inadequate treatment. I fear that I risk professional negligence if I attend a sick unvaccinated horse and provided minimal treatment. For this reason, I only attend horses which I can be confident that I can treat properly, and so I only see horses that are vaccinated.

People have a choice whether or not they want to vaccinate and I respect that. But in turn, they must respect my choice not to lower my professional standard, or put myself at risk of a deadly virus.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Jenna Poppitt BVSc BSc (vet) (hons) N5188

All Horses Veterinary Services



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