

21 April 2016

The Agriculture and Environment Committee Hendra Vaccine Inquiry  
Parliament House  
Brisbane  
Queensland 4000  
By email: [aec@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:aec@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Dear AEC Committee Members,

**RE: Submission to the Qld Parliament's Hendra virus Vaccine Inquiry**

I am a veterinarian with forty-five years experience and operate a veterinary practice with a large proportion of its case load being equine associated. I am also a horse owner and run a horse stud and spelling complex.

Hendra virus infection in horses is the most significant event I have witnessed in my career. For the first twenty-five years of my career the possibility of contracting any sort of disease by handling horses was regarded as non-existent. Now Hendra is a very real threat with catastrophic implications, not only for the infected horse/s but all persons who come in contact with such horses.

It is not just the worry of personal illness but also the responsibility for staff and our clients handling the horses that is causing a massive amount of psychological stress.

The amazing work that was done to so quickly produce and market a scientifically proven Hendra vaccine for horses ranks as a great achievement in Veterinary Science.

It is extremely distressing to hear the criticisms and untruths being spread by those who are opposed to Hendra vaccination. It is equally distressing to hear the criticisms of vets about the price we have to charge for vaccination and also the procedures we have to go through when confronted by a possible Hendra case. Like most practices, our charges are based on a fairly low margin, and I feel it is our duty to make the vaccination as affordable as we can. However, it is still a significant cost to horse owners, particularly if they have a lot of horses and I believe the cost is the reason for most of the opposition to the vaccine. If the vaccine was provided for free, most opposition would disappear overnight.

Of all the horses we have vaccinated here, the only reactions we have seen is a small percentage of horses showing soreness around the vaccination site; but this is no different to what is expected with other commonly used vaccines.

I am old enough to have seen when a lot of diseases that are now controlled or minimised by effective vaccinations, were very prevalent in both animals and people. It is now sadly amusing when people claim these diseases are not common enough to worry about. It is the use of vaccinations that has made it this way. If vaccinations are jeopardised by ignorant, unscientific opinions, then we can expect to see a return to a higher incidence of such diseases.

It is my fervent wish that your committee will appreciate the weight of scientific information put before you and not be swayed by ignorant and ill informed opinions.

Yours sincerely

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