

20 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 Katelyn McNicol and I am an equine veterinarian currently employed at WestVETS Equine Hospital in Anstead, Queensland. I have been a practicing equine veterinarian in south east Queensland for over 6 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.

Our practice employs 9 full time veterinarians and between us we have administered over 7000 Hendra vaccinations. Of the horses I have personally vaccinated I have not been made aware of any long term or significant adverse reactions, nor have I been aware of any similar reactions from any of the other horses vaccinated by our vets. I have had a small number of horses that have developed a sore neck at the site of injection and an even smaller number of horses that have developed an elevated temperature for up to 48hrs post injection. All of these reactions have been reported to Zoetis.

I personally do not have any reservations using the Hendra vaccine, and have vaccinated my own horses regularly since the vaccine was first made available.

As an equine veterinarian working in a referral hospital in south east Queensland the risk of exposure to Hendra virus is a daily reality. As the single most effective way to reduce my risk of contracting the Hendra virus, the Hendra vaccine is a vital component in keeping me safe and saving my life. And in saying that, it should be obvious that I whole heartedly believe the vaccine is not only effective but reliable. The hard work and dedication of Dr Deborah Middleton is what allows me this confidence in the vaccine.

The introduction of the vaccine has had a significant impact on our practice's workplace health and safety. As a referral hospital we are regularly asked to admit and treat extremely sick horses and the vaccine allows us to admit and treat these horses to the best of our ability. Without the safety and protection the vaccine affords us we would not be able to treat these horses to the same standards whilst still protecting ourselves.


I regularly attend equestrian events acting as the treatment veterinarian. As in my day to day work life, once I have accepted this job and walked onto the show grounds I am then responsible for the safety and well being of every horse and their owner at that event. It is naïve to think that it is impossible that a subclinical horse infected with Hendra virus could attend an equestrian event and

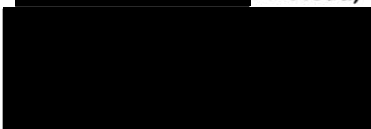
infect other horses and humans. This is not a risk I chose to take and therefore will only attend and be responsible for equestrian events where all of the horses have been vaccinated.

The significance of the Hendra vaccine to the safety of vets and vet nurses working in south east Queensland can not be strongly stated enough. Without it I would not feel safe enough to be able continue working in Queensland.

Yours sincerely,

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Dr Katelyn McNicol, BVsc (Hons)
WestVETS Equine Hospital
 Anstead, 4070

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