

Research Director  
Agriculture and Environment Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
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I hereby submit the following to the Parliamentary Inquiry on Hendra virus (HeV) EquiVacc® vaccine and its use by veterinary surgeons in Queensland for your consideration.

My horses are more than just livestock to me. My horses are a much loved part of my family. For those on the committee that don't own horses, they are an animal that form strong bonds with their owners if they are treated right, they become your companion, and we, as riders literally trust them with our lives.

My property is within 2km of a large flying fox colony in Caboolture, and at certain times of year, my property is directly under their flight path. It is a common for bat droppings to land directly on my horses. This created a significant level of anxiety as I was fully aware of the seriousness of the Hendra virus.

The release of the EquiVacc HeV vaccine on a limited use permit could not come quick enough for me. I was an early adopter, and my horses were all vaccinated as soon as my veterinarian had stock available in 2012. My horses have been fully vaccinated ever since.

Whilst there are risks of adverse reactions with all vaccines and medications, the peace of mind that this vaccine has given me cannot be described. This vaccine keeps my horses, and most importantly, myself and my family safe from the Hendra virus. None of my horses have had an adverse reaction to the vaccine, not even injection site soreness. I have many friends and acquaintances who have vaccinated their horses, and like my horses, they have not seen the adverse reactions that are being claimed on social media. I re-iterate - this vaccine keeps my horses and my family safe, I want it to remain available.

This vaccine also keeps my veterinarian safe. Something that is often overlooked when describing the Hendra virus as very rare, is that it is not so rare for veterinarians. People turn to their vets when their horses are sick. Aside from the Workplace Health and Safety implications, it has to be remembered that vets have families. If they are exposed to a confirmed Hendra case, it is my understanding that they are not to have close contact with their families until cleared by Queensland Health.

From my personal experience, I believe this is a great vaccine, and it keeps my horses, my family, myself and my veterinarian safe.

Kind Regards,

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Chris Nichols