

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Robert Hansen](mailto:Robert.Hansen)
Subject: Submission to Hendra virus Vaccine Enquiry
Date: Thursday, 21 April 2016 5:26:29 PM

21 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: Submission to Hendra virus Vaccine Inquiry

I am an Equestrian Queensland member who breeds and competes Warmbloods of international quality in dressage. I have 52 years experience in equestrian competition and am a sixth generation Australian horseman. Two of our horses have achieved Queensland Champion and Queensland Young Horse of the Year awards and have competed at international events in Australia (CDIs).

I have vaccinated nine horses since 2013. These have included aged horses to 26 years of age, a pregnant mare and her foal, now 18 months, our brood mares and our competition horses. One 22 year old died within a week of receiving a booster, one 21 year old suffered with a stiff neck and had difficulty lowering his head to graze but would happily eat if his feed bin was elevated, a 15 year old mare had a palm size swelling at the vaccination site for a week, and a five year old mare had a stiff neck for approximately a week.

The horse that died was thought to have had a heart attack by the attending vet, another highly respected performance vet suggested that the symptoms could have related to an aneurism. I had always expected this horse to not age well. He was 17.3+ and weighed approx. 800kgs when in full work. I suspect that the weather/temperatures and possible heat stress may have been involved and compounded by an undetected elevated temperature due to the vaccine.

The other horses I consider to have had vaccination reactions that can occur with any vaccination/needle, and don't believe were related specifically to the Hendra booster. All resolved well. Those that I have had boosters since then have been treated with Bute and given probiotics and no more reactions have happened.

Due to the amount of negative social media discussions I feel concerned each time I have the boosters done even though I don't really think there is any real reason to doubt the efficacy and safety of the HeV vaccine. I do everything I can to keep the horses in optimum health so the immune response is a normal and trouble free one.

I believe that the Australian horse owners have had so little exposure to equine viruses and their relevant vaccines in general that most Australians are not aware of the reactions that occur in Europe and the US. Information on this matter is easily sourced on the internet. A lot of the reactions occurring are the same as overseas horses suffer, including those to EI. My daughter's horse in Germany suffered a bad reaction to his last six monthly EI booster and he has had the needles before his importation to Australia and again after his exportation back to Germany. This was his only reaction. When horses were being vaccinated in Australia during our EI outbreak there were many supposed reactions to these.

I currently have bats feeding in trees on my property as they do several times a year. We have a number of camps close to us, and we had a Hendra horse death in our suburb. I will continue to vaccinate but have already started to extend the period to eleven months. I believe that the titre test should be used as a tool for evaluating the need to vaccinate at a given time as it is in other animals. I am fully aware that the biosecurity risk makes this a process that needs to be fully documented to provide safety for all involved.

Re Workplace Health and Safety, I am appalled at the prosecutions. Two of those prosecuted have been my vets. I have always had complete faith in their ability to safeguard both my horses and my family. Their ability and integrity I have never questioned.

Re biosecurity at competitions, given that owners seem to have a certain level of ignorance with regard to their horses' ability to infect other horses at events, I believe this is an important issue. Twice in the last two years our horses have become infected with serious viruses whilst stabled at QSEC. They brought home the virus to the rest of our herd before we saw signs of illness. As soon as we detected illness we quarantined the remaining healthy horses and were able to stop the spread. It was the delayed recovery/undetected underlying health issues from this infection that I believe led to the stiff neck reaction of the 21 year old horse. I had been told that horses had died while suffering with these viruses. In light of this I think it demonstrates that the risk of Hendra being spread at events could be high depending on how the virus is spread.

I feel that the vaccine should not be forced on horses not at risk. I do however support our vets in their need to be protected but I am appalled at the number of horses whose welfare may be affected by non treatment. I see this as a direct result of owners being too wary of vaccinating and putting their horses at risk of not being treated by vets with a Hendra Vac policy, worsened by the QWH&S prosecutions.

I believe that in general that the anti Hendra Vaccine movement is misguided in its belief that all reactions are related to an unsafe vaccine, and that by pushing this view they are persuading owners in high risk areas that they are not in danger. There is some proven fact provided by Deb Middleton and her scientists, but the enormous amount of unknown means that black and white statements of this type are dangerous.

I will continue to vaccinate in a careful and considered manner.

Yours sincerely,

Liz Vansleve

EA NCAS Level 1

[REDACTED]

Mudgeeraba QLD 4213

