

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: Horse owner submission to Hendra virus Vaccine Inquiry

1. I am a horse owner in South East Queensland, in a Hendra Virus hotspot, and have seen the impact of the Hendra Virus and this vaccination after the outbreak at Redlands Veterinary Clinic in my role as Practice manager. 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.
 - The development, trials and approval processes of the vaccine
 - Who bears the risks of HeV infection and who incurs the costs and receives the benefits from each risk mitigation option.

I have vaccinated 8-10 of my own horses with the Hendra Virus vaccine and have had minimal to no reactions. Each horse has had at least 3-4 vaccinations, some 5 or 6 since its introduction and can see only benefits from the use of this vaccine. The virus itself has devastating consequences, and I am extremely concious about preventing any chance of contracting this devastating virus. I do not wish to personally expose myself, or any of our staff members at Redlands Veterinary Clinic and believe the risks of the virus is far more detrimental and dangerous than the use of the vaccine ever would be.

I feel that the cost of the vaccine is something that needs to be absorbed by horse owners, just as shoeing, riding and feeding horses are. I also do not think that it is unfeasable to think horse owners should have to pay for this vaccination,as they do for tetnus and strangles.

The vaccine assures our staff members that they are protected and considered in the workplace, and I feel is absolutely necessary if there is any future in the horse industry. As owners of leisure horses as well, I feel that I would not be comfortable in having staff members care, or have access to these horses without the Hendra Vaccine, nor would I want to have contact with horses that were not vaccinated with the vaccine. To me, it is simply not worth it. The history of horses that we, or any individual may come into contact with is often not known or can often never be 100% confirmed, nor is their living situations or the potential exposure risks obvious and I personally, do not want to put myself or any of our staff members or those assisting me with my own horses at risk of exposure given this.

Furthermore, I compete my horses both across South East Queensland and nationally, and do not wish to be exposed to any horse that could be harbouring this virus. I would prefer to be stabled separately to those horses that are not Hendra Vaccinated, and am always conscious that some around me may not be vaccinated. Yes, majority of these horses (including my own) are stabled and cared for meticulously however this virus is constantly evolving and no one is exempt from the even slight chance of potentially contracting it.

I feel confident in the efficacy of the vaccine, and the reliability of a horse classified as protected, and as previously specified, I have had minimal issues with the administration of the vaccine in my own horses. At worst, they have been a bit stiff, or swollen at the injection site – as can often happen with other injections or forms of vaccination for 1-2 days following the vaccination. I feel that there is a lot of unwarranted hysteria regarding the vaccination and having seen our vet practice vaccinate over 1500 horses, the reactions noted have been statistically low and I feel confident that my horses will be safe following the administration of the vaccine, as well as recommending this to clients and friends.

It would be ideal, if the vaccine was increased to annually, however I am aware that this requires testing, and confirmation and more than likely will be possible in the future.

Finally, I feel that there is currently no alternative to the use of this vaccine. This vaccination could be potentially life-saving for both horse and owner, and to me I could not even consider the possibility of not vaccinating against this dreadful virus.

Yours sincerely,



Abbey Lovell
Redlands Veterinary Clinic – Practice Manager

