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Submission for .....

Hendra virus (HeV) EquiVacc® vaccine and its use by veterinary surgeons in Queensland

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To whom it may concern,

I wish to put in a small submission that would take into account a horse owner that has varied issues.

I am from the Gold Coast Qld

I own 5 horses of various ages, one of which is living in Victoria that will soon return to us here.

I have vaccinated the 3 out of the 4 Qld horses. The 4<sup>th</sup> hasn't been vaccinated yet because she is unhandled and can be done once she returns from the breakers in a few weeks time.

I do not have any concerns that my horses could contract Hendra. I have very little bat movement and I have taken all suggested precautions.

I vaccinated my horses because of the fear that they would not receive treatment by a vet should they become ill.

I have had a horse that became seriously ill last year who was rushed to surgery but later died of colic. He was vaccinated and I was very grateful that he was, as at no time was anyone concerned about their own safety from the virus and everything was done to save him under emergency factors. Unfortunate nothing helped.

My horses were first vaccinated in August and of 2014 six month booster done on the 27th March 2015. The horse I mentioned died February 2015. With the other two I experienced no issues with vaccination.

Then the next six month vaccination was due again in August. However with Zoetis allowing horses to go for 11 months without the Booster I let it go a little longer and called to vaccinate two horses in October. Unfortunately the older gelding 20yrs had a condition of firstly cellulites' that spread further to cause his tendon to inflame a condition known as Tenosynovitis. Vet administered six month booster to the mare but couldn't to the 20 year old gelding as well the vaccination is known to cause raised temperatures and as he already had an infection it could compromise his health. The 20 yr old gelding also has a condition of heart arrhythmia from a bout of confirmed Ross River fever.

At his age and current semi retired status it was best thought to see if he lived before giving him a booster.

He went on to survive the tendon infection and has now fully recovered from the condition and continues his semi retirement.

Since then the next 6 month booster was due again on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March. (The anniversary of the very first six month booster) the mare got hers on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April and so did the gelding.

This time I feel because the vet delivered the injection by pinching the skin and lifting it, the mare had two swollen lumps. She had two because the vet pulled away from the mare when she acted up a little and then did a second booster. The next day the mare could barely move her neck and had to be given Bute for 3 days. Unable to be worked she also missed out attending a competition she was entered into and also we had to cancel a lesson. I lost about \$150.00 in fees and my instructor was also not paid so she lost \$80.00 of her income. I also spent 2 days icing the site and also spent \$30 on Bute. She now has recovered. This was reported to the APVMA.

The gelding was fine.

The issue with the gelding then came when the vet's office contacted me this week to say that Zoetis have said he must have a second booster to get back onto the register. In the mean time he would be considered unvaccinated. He was 12 days over from the previous 12months booster. Zoetis said they would accept 7 days but not 12. My vets have said that he is considered unvaccinated until he has his second shot and would not perform evasive procedures on him should he become ill or injured. The he would have to undergo blood tests prior to any treatment.

My quandary is this. He is a horse with a condition of heart arrhythmia. High temperatures could result if further heart muscle deterioration and resulting death. He's a horse of age and therefore a more simple condition such as a mild colic could turn out badly for him because his heart accelerating isn't something he should experience and should be avoided. (vets advice) Essentially vets practice that a 12 month vaccination safe program despite that being contrary to the six month booster recommendation of the research. If he was titre tested he would show immunity to Hendra.

If he was ill and was tested for Hendra it would show up negative. We know this because all horses tested in the 1<sup>st</sup> 6 weeks of their very first vaccination, challenged, did not show signs of virus shedding. Yet despite this information Zoetis won't re register him and my vets won't attend to him as if he was vaccinated. If I give him the second booster so close to the one a fortnight ago as we know now, further down the track he may show signs of higher temperatures the more he is immunised. Higher temperatures would mean an increased heart rate not good for an aged horse with a heart arrhythmia. Due to the cellulites and the Tenosynovitis I have also been suspicious that his immune system isn't the best probably why he fell to Ross River 8 years ago.

My vets agree that he doesn't need another booster. They agree that he is immunised. That if he was tested for the virus it would come up negative and if he was titre tested it would show immunity. If I give him a booster it may very well compromise his health. If I give him another booster now he would be able to be placed back onto the register. My vets still won't attend to him as if he is an immunised horse. I am also one of the many that have followed every precaution to prevent my horses contracting Hendra and therefore it's highly unlikely very highly unlikely any of

my horses and especially this gelding could contract Hendra. If he dies from the close second booster he would be placed into that category of a horse with a previous ailment and be ignored.

What I am and my fellow horse owners are looking for is....

- Acceptance that 12 monthly boosters are all that's required.
- Acceptance that 12 monthly titre testing is a safe alternative for those that chooses to use it and is recommended for horses that have compromised health conditions.
- As research is further used from the general population so that a further expansion of time between boosters is granted if it can be proven, and this be given a priority by the APVMA.

I also feel that 12 monthly and maybe further times of vaccination schedules will aid in the practice of immunisation.

Vets don't need to be given such strict guidelines to treat a horse that is vaccinated or not. Common sense must prevail here. A lame horse or a horse with a gaping hole in its chest because the owner saw it try to jump out of the yard, does not have Hendra. The likelihood of either ever having Hendra immunised or not is so small there is no risk.

Many horses dying and being privately buried because of the threat of quarantine is rife amongst horse owners, and so I conclude that the no vaccination policy currently being practised by vets, is only leading horse owners in a direction whereby we may experience another human death.

Kind regards



Kate Taylor

