

21/4/16

The Agriculture and Environment Committee Hendra Vaccine Inquiry

Parliament House. Brisbane, QLD, 4000.

Dear AEC Committee,

I am a current James Cook University 5th year BVSc student and as such will be entering the workforce within the next year. As I intend on working largely within equine industries, I have an extremely vested interest in the fate of the Hendra vaccine.

I feel as though any resistance to this vaccine is either lack of knowledge, naivety or just selfishness. In the current state of vaccination uptake, veterinarians are faced every day with potentially life threatening situations. Even currently as a student, I have found myself in countless situations where I am forced to question whether helping these animals is worth the risk. Unfortunately our compassion for these creatures mean that we are in a situation where alleviating the suffering does satisfy the risk. The ability to manage such a huge consequence with the simplicity of a single vaccine is a credit to our industry, making it such a disappointment that it is not more widely accepted.

When the query of vaccination is raised, those who are not likely to comply will quickly resort to the “adverse reactions” waffle – that which we hear far too commonly but are yet to see much evidence of. It would seem the usage of social media sites largely serves the purpose of those who have the time to use them; of which I can assure you is not practicing veterinarians. Perhaps if a governing body were to set a stance on such an issue, people would stop resorting to Facebook etc as a source of information purely because it is readily available.

I hope that in my future as a vet, my life and the lives of those around me will not have to be risked senselessly because an opposition against the vaccine once existed. With any luck this will be the end of the ‘Hendra anti-vaxxers episode’ and my generation can work free of this easily avertible risk – I am quickly learning our profession is dangerous enough as is.

Sincere Regards,

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