

INFORMATION RELEASE IN RELATION TO HENDRA VIRUS PROTOCOLS

Dear Breeder,

The HTBA has been asked by the following stallion farms to alert breeders to a vaccination policy change with regards to HeV (Hendra Virus);

Arrowfield, Aquis Farm, Coolmore, Darley, Kingstar, Kitchwin Hills, Newgate, Vinery, Yarraman Park.

The recent confirmed case of HeV (Hendra Virus) in the Hunter Valley has highlighted the unpredictable incidence of Hendra and therefore the potential threat posed to all persons and horses that may come into contact with the virus.

The above farms have assessed the risks posed to both human and horse health and revised their protocols for the 2019 breeding season. The farms have agreed on a unified policy whereby they will NOT accept mares to be served in the 2019 or subsequent breeding seasons that are NOT VACCINATED for Hendra. This protocol will be applicable to horses visiting the farms, irrespective of their origin. Please do not hesitate to contact your stallion farm for further information and explanation.

HTBA President Dr Cameron Collins said “Our motivation is to safeguard the health of our people and the horses in the thoroughbred industry. Your veterinarian will be best placed to assist and advise on the implementation of vaccination.”

In addition to the above stallion farms, the three veterinary clinics in Scone have released a joint statement regarding their position on vaccination (below) and the majority of broodmare farms have communicated that they have already vaccinated or are in the process of vaccinating all their resident horses prior to the commencement of the breeding season.

Veterinary Clinics Hendra Virus Vaccination Statement

The three equine veterinary clinics in Scone (Scone Equine Hospital, Dartbrook Equine Veterinary Clinic, and Hunter Equine Centre) are fully supportive of the decision by Hunter Valley stallion farms to vaccinate their entire horse population and impose the requirement for all walk-on mares to be vaccinated for Hendra virus (HeV).

The veterinary clinics have a legal responsibility with a zero-tolerance level for exposure of our staff, horse staff or the public to any horse with an identified risk of HeV infection.

This responsibility applies both within the veterinary clinics and on clients’ properties. The veterinary clinics have operated in this way since the emergence of HeV, but the recent confirmed case in the Hunter Valley means there is now an elevated level of vigilance for this uncommon but potentially fatal disease.

The clinical signs of HeV infection can be subtle and inconsistent and it is impossible to exclude a diagnosis of HeV infection without laboratory testing. Exclusion test results can take up to 48 hours.

When considering the possibility of Hendra in an **unvaccinated horse**, veterinarians adopt a tiered risk-assessment approach. If it is necessary to perform an exclusion test, the horse will not be admitted to any local clinic. While awaiting a negative test result, only limited veterinary care, to ensure horse welfare can be provided. Euthanasia on humane grounds may be necessary for some cases (eg. surgical colics).

Some equine insurance policies have exclusions in place relating to HeV. Horse owners and managers should be aware of the wording in their policies. Unvaccinated horses which are waiting for HeV exclusion results will not be admitted to veterinary clinics, regardless of their insurance status.

Vaccination is the most effective method for prevention of Hendra virus. The widespread use of this safe and cost-effective vaccine will ensure that veterinarians are able to provide the care that horses require while ensuring the safety of veterinary and horse staff.

HTBA Members - Hendra Information Evening
(Registrations Essential - admin@htba.com.au)

5pm Monday 8th July 2019
Scone Raceclub (Register via email to admin@htba.com.au)

HTBA members have the opportunity to attend an information session by Local Lands Services with regional Veterinarians, questions from the panel following the presentation, further information and fact sheets below.

The Hunter Thoroughbred Breeders Association board of Directors

2 July 2019

Further information

- [Hendra Facts - NSW Health](#)
- [Hendra Facts - Department of Primary Industries](#)
- [Hendra Work Health & Safety Responsibilities](#)
- [Hendra Prevention Advice - QLD Gov](#)

Hendra Vaccination

Vaccination of horses against Hendra virus is the single most effective way of reducing the risk of Hendra virus infection in both horses and humans, vaccinations must be carried out by a Veterinarian and registered. Human infection and deaths have occurred following high-level exposure to body fluids from infected horses. Vaccinating horses is an important measure to prevent this occurring and provides a public health and workplace health and safety benefit.



Reminder to Horse Farms

1. This is the season when Hendra virus is more common in NSW i.e. the cooler months of the year.
2. Horse farms should talk to their vet about vaccinating their horses for Hendra virus to protect both the horses and their human handlers.
3. The symptoms of Hendra virus infection are not specific. Horses may be listless, feverish, show signs of colic, neurological signs (wobbly, head tilt, unusual gait etc), respiratory symptoms, abnormal behaviour or die suddenly.
4. Farms with sick horses should contact their local veterinarian who will notify a Local Lands Service inspector or an inspector with DPI if they consider the case highly suspect for Hendra virus.
5. Owners should be aware of the risks associated with handling sick horses. The signs of Hendra virus are quite variable so **all sick horses should be handled cautiously and carefully and with as little contact as possible.**
6. **Children, domestic pets and other companion horses should not contact sick horses.**

Management of suspect Hendra cases

- Always use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when handling sick horses
- DO NOT allow sick horses to be handled by children or other people.
- Isolate sick horses from pets or other horses.
- DO NOT allow dogs or other animals to contact sick or dead horses. Keep them away from the sick horse and its body fluids.
- DO NOT move sick horses to another area as this may spread the infection.

