

## The Australian Veterinary Association Limited

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The Hon Ian Callinan QC  
Commissioner  
Equine Influenza Inquiry  
PO Box 72  
Queen Victoria Building NSW 1230

**Facsimile: 02 9267 8709**

Dear Commissioner

The Australian Veterinary Association was granted leave to appear and made a Preliminary Submission to the Inquiry last year and a final submission recently. This is to respond to your request for submissions in relation to vaccination for equine influenza.

The Emergency Animal Diseases Response Agreement (EADRA) provides for funds for eradication from the parties to the value of 1% of the Gross Value of Production of the industry concerned. In this case by agreement of the parties it was decided to extend through the 1% limit to 3% due to the strong possibility of eradication.

Given that more than \$100m has been spent one might expect that the benefits of EI freedom (including no need to vaccinate) should be realised. The nature of the EADRA is such that continued vaccination would probably mean that EI would be considered endemic and as such the EADRA may not apply to equine influenza. This would deny horse owners the benefits of sharing costs in the event of future outbreaks.

Our response to the vaccination question is attached.

The AVA places its expertise in biosecurity and quarantine at the disposal of the Commission. I would be able to make appropriate members available if this would be of assistance. Our submissions seek to provide a way forward in the interests of the Australian community.

Yours sincerely

Dr Diane Sheehan  
**National President**  
8 April 2008



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**Equine Influenza Inquiry**

Supplementary Submission

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**Australian Veterinary Association Ltd**

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## **Ongoing vaccination of horses after eradication**

### **Overview**

The Commissioner has requested that parties provide a supplementary submission on the issue of the adoption of ongoing vaccination of horses against equine influenza. The Australian Veterinary Association makes the following comments.

With the eradication of equine influenza from Australia there is no need for ongoing vaccination. It is recommended that vaccination cease so that the general horse industry and the vast majority of people involved with horses across Australia, can return to the disease free status that they have enjoyed previously

### **Industry Concerns**

There is, however, considerable concern amongst sectors of the horse industry, particularly the Thoroughbred racing industry, that there has already been a breakdown in implementation of quarantine protocols once and that therefore it is likely to happen again at some point in the future. The racing industry is calling for ongoing vaccination of their racehorses in order for racing to be able to continue in the event of a future equine influenza outbreak. The racing industry sees this as a form of business continuity insurance as the financial impact of the current outbreak on the racing industry has been severe.

### **Short Term Use of Vaccine**

Ongoing vaccination is a useful strategy in the short term. It will enable horses that have been vaccinated twice to receive the third vaccination. This will confer a much longer duration of immunity to these horses and provide a greater level of certainty that the current goal of eradication is achieved. Vaccination will also allow the recommendation of the Callinan and Beale inquiries to be considered and implemented during a period of time when the level of herd immunity is high. It will provide the industry with some level of confidence that their horses are being protected while the quarantine barrier is being re-established. Vaccination of horses in the short term will allow investment in new quarantine facilities and infrastructure to be undertaken.



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### **Disadvantages of Ongoing Vaccination**

There are, however, many problems associated with ongoing vaccination in the longer term. Countries that have been influenza free for many years while still having compulsory vaccination requirements for equine influenza, such as Hong Kong and Japan, both had delays in diagnosis of influenza associated with the greatly reduced clinical signs of influenza in populations of vaccinated horses. These delays meant that in both cases the outbreak had spread considerably before diagnosis, which made control much more difficult. In the current Japanese outbreak the first cases were reported prior to the outbreak here in Australia, yet there are still new cases of influenza reported in horses. Vaccination of all or some of the horses in Australia will not stop the importation of infected animals from overseas. Only effective quarantine protocols that are implemented appropriately will minimise the possibility of a future Equine Influenza outbreak.

### **Vaccine Bank**

The ability to immediately access an effective vaccine in the event of a future outbreak of equine influenza would greatly assist industry confidence. This would also assist in effective disease response measures. Australia's current regulatory framework accommodates shelf registration of vaccines and with membership of a vaccine bank, e.g. by contract with a manufacturer, this ensure that vaccine would be available if required.

*Dr Di Sheehan*

*President*

*The Australian Veterinary Association*