

Queensland Horse Council Inc.



The Queensland Horse Council Inc praises the performance of the Hendra virus vaccine for horses even though being advised that a technical hitch has delayed the 12 month duration of immunity testing.

QHC President Mrs Debbie Dekker said “Unfortunately the virus used to challenge the animals was not a lethal dose, and this became obvious when the unvaccinated control animals did not become sick. In order for the tests to be reliable, it is important that the vaccinated horses are exposed to a lethal dose of Hendra virus.”

“This means that the study needs to be repeated, and early 2014 is the earliest that appropriately vaccinated horses will be available for testing.”

Mrs Dekker reassures horse owners. “The good news is that Field studies have shown that horses receiving booster vaccinations at either 6mths or 12mths after their primary course of injections show an excellent response to the boosters.

This tells us that vaccine ‘memory’ is well-established, and it is this aspect of vaccination that will be the key to providing longer term field protection.”

Whilst the resulting delay is disappointing, the QHC is absolutely delighted that the same high standards utilised during the research and development of the vaccine are being maintained during the immunity testing processes.

Mrs Dekker said “We are very happy with the rigorous research, development and testing that CSIRO have performed in getting the vaccine to its current state. It is exciting that such an effective and safe vaccine is available to us for us to protect our horses against Hendra virus. It is truly the best way for horse owners to protect themselves, their families and their horses against this horrible virus.”