

31.07.10

Horse Federation of SA Inc (Horse SA)

Committee Secretary Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and
Transport PO Box 6100 Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600 Australia

Submission for the Senate Inquiry:

Dear Secretary

Horse SA is a not-for-profit community based organisation which works in the key focus areas of horse health & welfare, horse keeping & the environment, road safety, community facilities, recreational trails, industry & workforce development.

The organisation has a membership base of over 260 clubs, businesses and individuals. Member types range from racing to pony club, from local coaches to businesses who regularly export.

An overview of the organisation can be found on

Addressing the Terms of Reference:

a) The implications to the Australian horse industry of committing to an Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA);

The implications to committing to EADRA are apparent on a number of levels. The obligations and responsibilities are outlined in the Deed which is available for public viewing on the Animal Health Australia website.

In addition, Horse SA would like to have the following noted:

Federal & State Governments will need to demonstrate ongoing collaboration, engagement and genuine partnership with signatory horse industry organisations.

Amongst a suite of initiatives, State Governments will need to include evidence of state-level models for industry engagement that is regular, transparent, consultative and responsive.

Horse SA is seeking that the Federal Government provides a funding investment into horse biosecurity research; to address aspects including point of entry best practices, increasing effectiveness of emergency disease rapid response, safety, practices, procedures & protection of workers & horse owners working with sick horses, vaccine development.

Horse SA is seeking evidence that each State and Territory Government can demonstrate a consultative process within their jurisdiction on issues and aspects around maintenance of the EADRA agreement.

Horse organisations will have an increased focus to facilitate development of industry wide biosecurity plans for events and farm gate enterprises and to meet other requirements of the EADRA agreement.

Horse owners themselves will require access to information and a knowledge bank on biosecurity practices, issues, research extension and collaborative networks in order to make informed decisions about how best to manage their own enterprise or community

event. It is noted that there is currently no online “horse biosecurity clearinghouse” of information and resources, rather scattered sites and organisations providing their own guides.

Horse SA recommends the establishment of a clearing house of information or “one stop shop” approach to support horse owners and therefore organisations in meeting EADRA industry biosecurity plan obligations and that a special funds release can be arranged (or added to an existing program) in order that local communities can apply to conduct “how to” customised educational programs and capacity building programs by region or organisational type.

The public consultation process planned by Animal Health Australia will highlight aspects around the requirement of EADRA to identify in advance a suitable cost recovery mechanism and seek responses to this.

Should a levy mechanism be agreed on, the next endeavour is to draft a well-worded Bill to present to Parliament to support the cost recovery mechanism. It is requested public opportunity is well promoted for contribution to this process.

b) Options for equitable contributions by horse owners to a levy scheme to meet their obligations under EADRA in the event of an emergency animal disease outbreak in horses;

Animal Health Australia has released a Levy Paper and Horse SA is taking an active role in promoting industry education about the issues, discussion, debate and feedback.

At the time of writing, it is becoming clear that an increasing number of horse organisations are prepared to agree to a levy mechanism that is

\$0

Broad based

Commercially collected

Direct references to two examples of these endorsements can be found on the Animal Health Australia horse owner page and Pony Club Australia homepage. The first example contains agreement by a significant number of national horse organisations.

Horse SA, in their Board meeting of 19 July, 2010 determined that following the consultation period of the Animal Health Australia Levy Options paper that Animal Health Australia & the Primary Industries Minister (SA) will be provided with a response from Horse SA. It is not appropriate to pre-empt the results of a consultative process.

c) Criteria by which the cost burden of a levy would be shared between Commonwealth, state and territory governments, horse industry groups and owners; and

Any changes or amendments to the criteria within the Cost Sharing Deed itself, is first of all a matter for the signatories of all species. It is noted that there needs to be regular reviews, including addition or deletion of diseases from the cost sharing table and potential adjustments to percentages paid by industry & government.

Horse SA advocates regular review of the EADRA agreement and related Bills, Acts and Regulations and will promote industry input opportunities. These reviews to be held at least every three years or by mutual agreement of all parties
The emerging criteria appears to be

\$0

Commercially collected

Broad based

d) Quarantine and biosecurity threats to Australia's horse industry.

Known threats to Australia's biosecurity are well documented.

The Biosecurity Australia Horse Industry Consultative Committee has an important role to play in the exchange of information. It has been noted on the DAFF website that this committee convened last on 21 April, 2010.

Professor Shergold's final report on Quarantine improvements post EI was due on 30 June 2010. The report includes a summary of implementation of all of the recommendations of the Equine Influenza Inquiry recommendations completed by this date.

As always, it is the "unknown" threats or variations to known threats that are a cause for concern.

South Australia is rarely a point of import/ export from Australia and as such previous enquiries have found that no State Government specific data is kept. The Senate Inquiry may be aware of a mechanism to resolve this.

Horse SA would be keen to see further investment in

Border security (livestock and related fields)

Extension programs promoting good biosecurity practices from the farm gate to businesses and importers.

A methodology to capture & analyse data relating to importing & exporting horses originating from or having the destination of South Australia

Horse SA does not wish to appear before the Senate on this matter.