

Signing EADRA

Horse owners ensuring an emergency response

The Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA) and the horse industry

Welcome to the first weekly update on the horse industry's submission to the Government to be a signatory to the EADRA and the levy options proposed to enable the horse industry to fulfil any financial obligations if the EADRA is activated in a future disease outbreak that affects horses.

What is the EADRA?

The Agreement is simply that – a legally binding agreement between the Commonwealth, State, Territory governments and animal industries detailing what will happen if a serious disease occurs (an 'Emergency Animal Disease' or EAD) that could affect one or more animal industries, could harm people or else could seriously affect Australia's ability to trade overseas.

The EADRA covers 21 diseases that can cause serious illness or death in horses (and in some cases also other animals) or have an enormous impact on horse businesses. Some may be introduced by an infected horse, some by other animals, others by insects/things or people that can carry the disease agent.

If a disease outbreak occurs, those animal industries that are signatories to the EADRA are assured of a comprehensive and coordinated response to control or eradicate the disease as soon as the outbreak is detected, plus a say by the industry on how the response is carried out. There is no lag time determining who will pay for the expertise, people and resources needed for the response because the Commonwealth Government underwrites the industry's share of the costs of the response. The industry percentage share of the costs is known in advance (costs are shared between the Commonwealth and State Governments and the affected industry [or industries], based on a formula pre-determined in the EADRA). The actual dollar value to be paid is determined once the disease response has concluded.

The levy is zero-based, that is, no money is collected until a disease emergency actually occurs. The industry share of the costs is repaid, usually by a levy, over a period of up to 10 years.

What if the horse industry doesn't sign?

In that case, there will be no guarantee that a rapid national response to an emergency disease that affects horses would be mounted. When equine influenza (EI) was first detected in the general horse population in 2007, the Agreement was activated on the understanding that the horse industry was about to sign the EADRA. A submission had been presented just prior to the outbreak for the horse industry to be included. As a result, the national response to the outbreak was up and running within a few hours of the first positive horse result.

The Government has now stated that 'never again' would it underwrite a response unless an animal industry is a signatory to the Agreement. This means if EI happened now, the outcome may be completely different, with the end result being having to live with EI and its on-going respiratory problems and constraints on horse trade and competitions, and possibly bearing the added costs of vaccinations of questionable efficacy.

Website - just for the horse industry

If you want to know more about how important this submission is to the horse industry, please visit the Horse and EADRA section on the Animal Health Australia website:

www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/

Important – the Government requires a submission that is supported by the majority of the horse industry by **DECEMBER 1**. This means the majority of horse owners and horse related

industries agree that the horse industry should be a signatory to the EADRA and there is broad agreement on one or more levy mechanisms as part of this agreement.

Your input is valuable!

We encourage all horse owners to have input into this submission. In fact we need it because your collective views are essential to prove to the Government that you support both the EADRA and a levy. A single submission from the horse industry on the EADRA and preferred levy options is required.

What if you don't agree? We need to know that too, especially why.

Please make the EADRA and the levy an important item on any meeting of your organisation, society or committee agenda within the next month and inform us of the discussion and outcomes of the meeting. If the matter has been recently discussed the outcomes already reached would be helpful. Attached to this newsletter is a template for your convenience.

You can send it back by:

email to Horse.EADRA@industry.nsw.gov.au – attention Dr Diane Ryan
fax to (02) 46406300
mail to: Dr Diane Ryan, Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute, PMB 4008,
Narellan NSW 2567.

Levy options

Any levy option must be equitable across the horse industry (so that the majority of the horse industry contributes and the payment of the levy does not disadvantage any group). A levy on a 'prescribed product', where many units are sold each year means that the total levy per unit will be very small. Remember the payment period can be over 10 years. How much? This is information that we need to work out for every levy option depending upon the repayment amount.

Some of the 'prescribed products' proposed by the recent horse industry meetings have included horse wormers, hard feed and a transit import levy but there are a number of others that are also being evaluated. You get to select the preferred option. We will provide the information you might need for your selection in forthcoming updates and on the website.

Where to get information?

The website http://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/aahc/horse-owners-and-the-eadra/horse-owners-and-the-eadra_home.cfm (or go to www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au and click on the Horse Industry and EADRA box) was set up to provide independent, factual advice on EADRA, possible levies and the submission plus answers to questions you might have about this process. If your question is not there already, send it to Horse.EADRA@industry.nsw.gov.au and it will be answered directly back to you plus the question and answer will be put on the website.

Who to contact?

Do you have any other questions about this process? We can be contacted at:

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