

HORSE INDUSTRY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

FINAL MINUTES

Meeting 18

Wednesday 12 July 2017

10.30am to 2.00pm

Department of Agriculture and Water Resources

7 London Circuit, Canberra ACT

L.1.06

Participants

Department of Agriculture and Water Resources

Jackie South (Chair)	Animal and Biological Import Assessments
Amy Little	Animal and Biological Import Assessments
Emma McGrath	Animal and Biological Import Assessments
Louise Pearce	Animal and Biological Import Assessments
Sarah Meoli	Animal and Biological Import Assessments
Gaylene Podhajski* (AM)	PEQ Operations
Michael Okines* (AM)	PEQ Operations
Peter Finnin	VEMS
Kerry Daly (PM)	Animal Biosecurity
Carolyn Sutton (AM)	Cost Recovery & Funding Analysis
Jason Lucas (AM)	Cost Recovery & Funding Analysis
Rhys Chapman	Cost Recovery & Funding Analysis
Erin Payne (PM)	Live Animal Export Program
Michelle Smith (AM)	Strategic Health

External

Kathleen Mullan	Harness Racing Australia
Josh Murphy	New Zealand Bloodstock
Cameron Croucher	Equine International Air Freight
Chris Burke	International Racehorse Transport
Mark Burnell	Australian Horse Industry Council
Andrew Small	Canterbury Park Approved Arrangement
Grace Forbes	Werribee International Horse Centre
Paula Ward	Equestrian Australia
James Gilkerson	Australian Veterinary Association
Ross Kendell*	Equine biosecurity consultant

Apologies

Cristy Secomb	Australian Equine Veterinary Association
Jeffrey Wilkinson	Australian Equine Veterinary Association
Andrew Kelly	Harness Racing Australia
Alyce Adams	VEMS
Barry O'Farrell	Racing Australia
Jagtej Singh	PEQ Operations
John Peatfield	Thoroughbred Breeders Association

*teleconference

Meeting commenced at 10:30am

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the 18th meeting of the Horse Industry Consultative Committee (HICC). The Chair acknowledged new members and apologies of those who could not attend. Housekeeping matters and emergency procedures were provided.

2. Minutes from meeting 17 and actions arising

The Chair called for comments on the Minutes for the 17th HICC meeting.

Action Item 1 (Meeting 17): *FaBS to give advice to industry on the cost of opening a compound for a small consignment. What is total cost to open a consignment with a minimal number of horses?* Jason Lucas gave advice on the cost of opening the Mickleham Post Entry Quarantine facility compound for a small consignment. Industry had previously expressed concern that small consignments may be under-recovered which may result in a fee increase in future. FaBS noted that fees and charges are structured to recover the full cost of delivering the service over a financial year, rather than on a per consignment basis. As such the financial sustainability is not substantially put at risk due to consignment size. The Chair noted this action item is closed.

Action Item 3 (Meeting 17): *SE to either finalise contract with BVP, or another provider or suggest service coverage on a consignment basis. If a contract is not signed with BVP, the department may ask AEVA to approach members to gauge broader interest in providing the service.* The committee agreed to hold over discussion until agenda item 5a.

Action Item 7 (Meeting 17): *Industry to propose a contingency arrangement in the case of a transiting horse requiring surgery.* Contingency arrangements in case of a horse transiting in Sydney en-route to Melbourne requiring emergency surgery. The Canterbury Park AA site would be the only suitable facility to take a horse imported from the northern hemisphere transiting in Sydney. And this would only be feasible if the facility was empty of either imported or local horses. Canterbury Park is used as a racehorse re-training centre when not in use for imported horses, so is generally unavailable for this emergency purpose. However, Andrew Small noted that Racing NSW is in the process of examining acquisition of a number of properties for their racehorse retraining program as Canterbury racecourse has outgrown demand. The Chair noted that further input from industry is needed and so this action item is still open.

No further comments were received and the Minutes from the last meeting were accepted.

3. Program Financial Update

The chair welcomed Jason Lucas from the department's Cost Recovery section. Jason presented the Biosecurity Cost Recovery Arrangement Financial Performance Report 2016-17 March Year-To-Date. Jason advised that the biosecurity arrangement recorded a surplus of \$4.9m against a budgeted surplus of \$5.3m for the period 1 July 2016 to 31 March 2017. Jason also noted that the year to date expenditure was under budget by \$7m, mostly due to the delayed pay rise from the Enterprise Agreement and supplier expenses down by \$2m.

Jason stated that PEQ facilities charges were predominately from cat and dogs. The PEQ daily horse husbandry fees were mostly above the budget line in terms of their contribution to the arrangement.

Chris Burke added that there is no set forecasting of the number of horses that will be imported into Australia besides the shuttle stallions each year, only potential guide are historical numbers.

4. New Offshore Charging Guidelines

Jason Lucas provided a verbal update on the new offshore charging guidelines that are in development. The guidelines aim to provide a clear policy and standard schedule for fees and to formalise the process of charging for off-shore audits.

ACTION ITEM 1: Finalised offshore charging guidelines to be discussed at HICC meeting 19 and relevant out of session updates will be circulated to members.

5. Mickleham Post-entry Quarantine Facility

a) Mickleham Specialist Equine Surgical Services Provider

Peter Finnin provided an update on equine surgical services at the PEQ facility. Ballarat Veterinary Practice (BVP) have opted not to continue to provide emergency equine surgical services to Mickleham and have retrieved all equipment at the PEQ facility. Currently there is no arrangement with any clinic to provide surgical services at PEQ. Industry were advised via email as soon as the department became aware that BVP had removed its service to the department. The department continues to seek advice from industry as to how the arrangement will be managed.

James Gilkerson asked if the equine veterinarian nominated will be notified of their nomination and potential times that they may be required. Chris Burke added that it is the shipper's responsibility to notify the nominated equine veterinarian. Both IRT and EIAF indicated that they are investigating appropriate solutions.

Members discussed the percentage of horses insured, with approximately only 30% (not including shuttle stallions) having appropriate insurance.

It was agreed that the department has provided an adequate surgery facility and does not intend to procure a surgical services provider. The department informed importers that Form 3.9 *Record of persons authorised to attend to horses in Mickleham* has been edited to include nomination of equine surgeon. This form is pending publication until legal advice is sought on departmental liability if an importer does not nominate a surgeon.

ACTION ITEM 2 - Updated Form 3.9 *Record of persons authorised to attend to horses in Mickleham* to be circulated to committee members once legal advice is finalised.

b) Yards and Improvements

Gaylene Podhajski provided an update of maintenance changes and improvements to the Mickleham compound. Additional wash basins have been installed, with four wash basins per compound. Improvements to the yards included additional drains and a temporary blue metal surface. Rubber matting and roller doors were replaced at the arrival area and truck wash area.

6. PEQ Auditing policy update

Amy Little provided an update on the pre-export quarantine (PEQ) facility auditing policy. Currently, PEQ facilities are approved for two or four years but there is a lack of clarity and transparency around how and why a facility is approved for two or four year and a need for a clearer policy. A PEQ audit policy will be developed to provide clarity on audit frequency, compliance stance and other matters. In the meantime, the policy has been updated to require new facilities to be re-audited in two years, while established facilities receive four year approvals. The department maintains discretion to audit on a more frequent basis should biosecurity concerns arise for example evidence of non-compliance at a PEQ facility, an outbreak of disease of biosecurity concern etc.

ACTION ITEM 3: The department to provide the draft PEQ facility audit policy to committee members for comment out of session.

7. Work Health and Safety

The Chair welcomed Michele Smith from the department's Strategic Health Unit. Michele provided an overview of work health and safety requirements when working on third party workplaces. The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* requires the department to provide and maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risks to health or safety. This responsibility extends to all workplaces where work is carried out on the department's behalf.

An induction package can be mutually developed between industry and the department, with industry encouraged to submit induction plans to the department for comment and advice.

Committee members were encouraged to be in contact with the department should they require any further assistance with work health and safety requirements.

Michele requested that HICC members consider distributing a letter she provided to them from the department to third party premises regarding how the parties can work together to enhance safety for workers.

8. Animal Biosecurity Update

a) Market access process and priorities based on horse movement trends

The Chair welcomed Kerry Daly from Animal Biosecurity Branch (ABB). The process for assessment and approval of countries for import of horses to Australia was explained. This process requires significant resourcing from the applicant countries, so the applicant countries must formally request market access. Once Animal Biosecurity receives a request for market access, these are assessed based on departmental priorities.

Kerry sought advice from industry as to the trends in international horse movements. This information is useful to guide ABB as they develop their future work-plan and prioritise market access requests. Industry indicated interest in imports from some new European Union countries in Eastern Europe, and certain South American countries such as Chile and Argentina (noting that currently there is no direct flight to Australia unless a charter flight is arranged). Industry expressed less interest in importing horses from South Africa due to the logistics of freighter routes.

Kerry Daly noted that glanders is a significant equine disease of concern in regards to approval of South American countries for import to Australia. The Australian policy requires countries to be glanders free and there are significant differences in glanders health status in South American countries. Cameron Croucher stated that South Korea, which is an unapproved country, may be a country to keep an eye on in the near future as it just lifted the financial restrictions on horse imports.

Animal Biosecurity confirmed that re-assessment of Hong Kong's approved country status is a current priority due to establishment and use of an Equine Disease Free Zone (EDFZ) in Conghua, China. The department is working with the Hong Kong Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and will keep industry updated on the situation.

b) Hendra export protocols and validation of the DIVA test

Kerry Daly provided an update on the current Hendra export protocols and the restrictions on horses that have been vaccinated for Hendra. Some exporting countries still have concerns about the Hendra vaccine safety and will not accept vaccinated horses. A DIVA (Differentiating Infected from Vaccinated Animals) test currently exists but is has not been validated for either diagnostic or exports use. The committee was asked if validating the DIVA test would be helpful to facilitate trade. The Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL) and the department is looking for feedback from industry as to the potential need and use for a validated DIVA test for horse exports.

There was some discussion about the use of a DIVA test for disease investigation compared to in export testing. James Gilkerson noted that validation of the DIVA test would be different dependent on the end use. Chris Burke commented that ideally DIVA test should have been validated when the vaccine was officially released. Chris also raised concern about difficulties in tracing horse's vaccination, testing and treatment history as the vaccination database may be inaccurate, horse passports may have been removed and change of horse ownership may make tracing veterinary records difficult.

Committee members agreed that export protocols for some countries are trade restrictive in regards to Hendra vaccinated horses. IRT noted that approximately 200-300 horses each year do not end up being exported because they have received the Hendra vaccine and hence are ineligible for export to certain markets.

ACTION ITEM 4: Kerry Daly (ABB) to set up a meeting with AAHL, ABB, AHIC, AVA, HICC representatives and Zoetis to discuss the Hendra DIVA test.

9. Other Business

a) Live export of equids (donkeys) for slaughter

The Chair welcomed Erin Payne from the Live Animals Export Program. Erin advised that there have been three separate enquiries from potential exporters to China about equids for slaughter. However, these inquiries had not progressed to actual applications to export. The department has identified a gap whereby if an application to export equids for slaughter was made, there are no regulations for animal welfare once the consignment reaches the country of import. At present, livestock (e.g. cattle and sheep) are covered by the Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS), however there is no similar arrangement for equids in the current legislation as they are not considered livestock. Erin also noted that there hasn't been a decision to regulate live export of equids for slaughter as there hasn't been any applications.

Jackie South asked what the department's position is on the issue of there being no ESCAS-style regulations. Erin replied that the department would have to notify the Minister of the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources of an application if/when received to consider establishing regulations.

James Gilkerson commented that there would be a big public response about horse slaughter and there was general agreement and concern on this matter from the committee. AVA and AEVA suggested that they intend to formally indicate opposition to the export of live equids for slaughter.

b) PEI Farm certification

Chris Burke raised that since the strangles case in horses export to Dubai, there has been changes to inspection/approval of pre-export properties. Peter Finnin added that for the next 12 months, there will be increased departmental workload until the 2 year cycle for Pre Export Inspection (PEI) audits begins.

There was a concern that local veterinarians at the properties may be signing off on certification without being the supervising veterinarian during per export.

Cameron Croucher added that Equine International Air Freight have distributed all manuals to clients and conducted site visits to confirm all information was understood.

c) Changing nature of Australian Exports and resources for Port Offices

Chris Burke raised that although the formal legislation for horse exports is understood by importers, there needs to be more flexibility on time requirements. Chris suggested the Department adapt to a more flexible process for areas that have strong quarantine processes, as it will assist in Australia being a more competitive exporter.

ACTION ITEM 5: Industry concerns for the changing nature of Australian exports and resources for port offices to be passed onto the Trade and Market Access Division in relation to the current review of export legislation.

d) Equine Influenza vaccination update

At the previous HICC meeting, the potential shortage of an equine influenza vaccine for export purposes was discussed at length. Amy Little advised that the department has recently granted an import permit to a vaccine manufacturing company to import a new equine influenza vaccine to Australia. The manufacturer now needs to obtain the relevant approvals from the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) before they can begin importing the vaccine to Australia.

10. Close meeting and next meeting

The Chair closed the meeting and suggested February for next HICC meeting to be held in Canberra.

Meeting finished at 2:00pm

Summary of Action Items

ACTION ITEM 1: Finalised offshore charging guidelines to be discussed at HICC meeting 19 and relevant out of session updates will be circulated to members.

ACTION ITEM 2 - Updated Form 3.9 Record of persons authorised to attend to horses in Mickleham to be circulated to committee members once legal advice is finalised.

ACTION ITEM 3: ABIAB to provide the draft PEQ audit policy to committee members for comment out of session.

ACTION ITEM 4: Kerry Daly (ABB) to set up a meeting with AAHL, ABB, AHIC, AVA, HICC representatives and Zoetis to discuss the Hendra DIVA test in a more defined discussion.

ACTION ITEM 5: Industry concerns for the changing nature of Australian exports and resources for port offices to be passed onto the Trade and Market Access Division in relation to export legislation.