



MEDIA RELEASE

NATIONAL HORSE ORGANISATIONS WELCOME AGREEMENT

In a joint statement, representatives of four national horse organisations today welcomed news that agreement had been reached, that will enable them to formally sign the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA) in early March.

The four bodies to sign the EADRA on behalf of the racing, performance and recreation sectors are:

- Australian Racing Board
- Harness Racing Australia
- Australian Horse Industry Council
- Equestrian Australia.

A meeting of all Australian governments and major livestock industries last week agreed that the horse industry should be admitted to the EADRA – providing greater certainty in rapidly mounting a response to a future exotic disease affecting horses. Under this agreement, the Commonwealth Government is committed to underwrite industry's share of the costs of an emergency response, enabling swift and effective action to control and eradicate a disease threat.

After extensive consultation coordinated by Animal Health Australia during the past 12 months, organisations representing a clear majority of horse owners have reached agreement about an acceptable funding mechanism to meet industry's share of the costs of an emergency response. Under this arrangement, a levy will only be imposed after an actual disease emergency, when the response is finished.

The leaders of the four national horse bodies have warmly welcomed the endorsement of all signatories to the (EADRA).

“This has been a long journey, but we are delighted that the final goal is now in sight. This historic and unprecedented agreement does demonstrate how important the health and welfare of their animals are to all horse owners.”

“The 2007 equine influenza outbreak showed how an exotic disease incursion can have widespread consequences for all sectors of the horse industry. This agreement is an important step in providing a greater level of protection and certainty for all horses and their owners.”

The CEO of Animal Health Australia, Dr Mike Bond, acknowledged the outstanding efforts of the four horse industry organisations, together with many representatives of the key recreational sectors to reach this point of consensus.

“The Australian horse-owning community is very diverse and communications are often difficult – especially at a grass-roots level. Many people in dozens of organisations have worked hard to ensure that there was effective consultation with their members. This was a crucial part of the submission that was made to the Commonwealth Government on behalf of industry by Animal Health Australia.”

The formal agreement is expected to be signed in March, in a ceremony at Parliament House, Canberra.

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[ENDS]

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