

SIGNING THE EADRA
Horse owners ensuring an emergency response
The Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA) and the horse industry

This is the fourth update on progress towards the horse-owning community signing the Emergency Disease Response Agreement (EADRA).

Recap

In case the grapevine has only just reached you, or it's all becoming a blur, here is a summary so far.....

The Ministers for Primary Industries from the Commonwealth and each state form what is known as the Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC). They meet on a regular basis to discuss primary industries issues of national significance.

At their April 2010 meeting, PIMC discussed the fact that the horse-owning community had not signed the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA), and had no mechanism in place to repay government for any outlay to fight a possible future emergency animal disease outbreak that affects horses. The Government was not willing to outlay funds to control an emergency horse disease if the horse-owning community did not have a mechanism in place to repay their share of the response costs.

The Council agreed that the horse-owning community would be given until 1 December 2010 to agree to an appropriate funding mechanism to repay government as provided for under the EADRA. If the horse-owning community failed to gain agreement by this date, government would not outlay the funds to fight an emergency horse disease outbreak; the horse-owning community would have to defend itself as best it could, and in the case of equine influenza, this would mean that government would not prevent sectors of the horse industry or the whole industry implementing voluntary or mandatory vaccination of horses.

Council members agreed that the horse industry needed to decide on the funding mechanism it would use and legislation would be written by the Commonwealth Government to support the preferred option.

Since the PIMC meeting, there have been numerous meetings of horse-owning community groups to discuss the EADRA and options for a levy as the funding mechanism.

The levy would only be activated to repay the horse-owning community's share of the debt arising from an emergency animal disease that required the activation of the EADRA to control or manage the disease. The Commonwealth Government would underwrite the resources required from the first day. The repayment period would be up to 10 years. (The horse industry does not have to repay the full amount; the proportion varies with the particular disease. See "Government And Livestock Industry Cost Sharing Deed" http://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/shadomx/apps/fms/fmsdownload.cfm?file_uuid=8B2F58C5-00A2-5203-6939-B9E990494602&siteName=aahc)

There is now a general recognition by all horse groups that the horse-owning community needs to be a signatory to the EADRA.

Levy options decided

A range of possible levy options have been discussed at the national, state and local levels of the horse-owning community. Because of the diverse nature of the horse sector, it was agreed that more than one levy option was needed if levy collection was to be equitable across the horse-owning community.

Two levy options have been identified as the most practical methods of repaying any future debt. At a recent teleconference of the Horse Levy Working Group, the following motion was passed unanimously:

“That the Horse Industry uses manufactured feed and anthelmintics (worm treatments) as approved levy mechanisms for recovering the industry’s share of an Emergency Animal Disease Response”.

The Commonwealth Government requires substantiation that the majority of the horse-owning community agrees that these two levy options are the preferred methods. Therefore it is very important that each association indicates the number of horse owners they represent when registering their response to the recommendation. Numbers both for and against the motion should be reported as accurately as possible. Submissions should clearly state how members have been informed of the issues (eg. through newsletters, meetings and surveys). The submission should also provide details indicating that members have been informed of their Board’s decision on their behalf, and given the opportunity to comment.

Please encourage local branches of your association to also submit minutes of any meetings that they have held to discuss the levy options and signing EADRA, and/or indicate support for the decision of their peak body. The more detail that can be provided indicating awareness of the issues and support for signing EADRA, the more weight the final submission to the Federal Government will carry. Individual comments are also encouraged, as they indicate widespread awareness and consultation.

We need these submissions by 30 September 2010 or as soon as possible thereafter so that we have time to prepare a submission to the Commonwealth Government to show that the majority of horse owners are in favour of the EADRA and the chosen levy options, well before the December 1 deadline.

Please send your submissions to horse.eadra@industry.nsw.gov.au or fax Attention Belinda Walker to 02 67424018.

Please note change of contact person for the EADRA for Industry and Investment NSW. Belinda Walker will fill this role until Di Ryan returns from overseas on November 1.

A number of horse groups have already sent their submissions and their quick response is greatly appreciated.

If you need any further information – please contact Belinda Walker on 02 67418363 or 0427 311817.