



PONY CLUB AUSTRALIA Inc.

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IMPORTANT

Essential reading for all horse owners

Pony Club Australia and EADRA

EADRA (Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement) is an agreement between the State and Federal Governments and the livestock industry. Its purpose is to coordinate action in the event of an outbreak of exotic disease within the livestock industry.

The horse community has no EADRA agreement with the Government.

The Government has stated that it will not take any action in the event of an exotic disease outbreak if there is no EADRA in place.

The Council of Pony Club Australia, whose members represent all State Pony Club Organisations, voted unanimously at its last meeting to support the establishment of an EADRA for the horse community.

The EADRA sets out the working arrangements and cost sharing details in the event of an exotic disease outbreak. The EADRA guarantees that the Australian Government will underwrite the costs of an emergency response, enabling decisive action to be taken immediately. Such rapid action is critical in the effective control and eradication of an exotic disease – as we saw with equine influenza in 2007.

It should be noted that more than a third of the 65 diseases presently listed in the EADRA, could affect horses. When an outbreak occurs, a management group consisting of representatives of all parties to the agreement will decide whether to respond or not, based on which option will be the least cost to the horse community. It is estimated that the cost to the horse community if EI became endemic would be ten to twenty times more than the cost of its eradication.

After an emergency response that is managed under the EADRA, the Australian Government allows up to 10 years to repay an industry's share of costs. The money would be collected through a levy.

When the emergency response is agreed, the levy is triggered and set to an agreed value. **Pony Club insists on a "zero levy" where no money is collected until an emergency actually occurs.** Monies are then collected through the agreed mechanism, and the response costs that are due to the Commonwealth are repaid once the outbreak has been eradicated or otherwise resolved. This option means that **until an actual emergency disease incursion occurs, industry pays nothing.**

When there is an incursion, the Australian Government guarantees that it will meet the response costs immediately, and industry can pay back its debt over time.

There is considerable flexibility as to the method of collecting a levy, and various mechanisms have been suggested. The Australian Government has some guidelines that must be followed, including a requirement for simplicity and ease of collection. While such a collection mechanism(s) should be as fair and equitable as possible, it is generally accepted that whatever the methods used, it will never be possible to 'capture' 100% of horse owners.

The suggested levy mechanisms are basically of two types.

- A levy on horses or owners. The levy would be applied on the registration of horses, or on annual memberships paid by owners, or on entry fees paid for events. This form of levy would place responsibilities on our volunteer club officials for its collection. They could be liable for heavy penalties if they fail to comply with the regulations. **Pony Club Australia opposes the introduction of this form of levy because of the responsibility it places on our volunteers.**
- A levy on horse related products. The levy would be added to the price of the product. Products that have been suggested include bagged horse feed, horseshoes and worming paste. Responsibility for the collection would rest with the manufacturers or wholesalers of these products. **Pony Club Australia believes this form of levy is acceptable.**

The Federal Government has given the horse community until 1st December to reach agreement on an EADRA, and requires convincing evidence that such agreement exists.

All Pony Clubs and members and other horse owners can help in ensuring we have an EADRA by writing or emailing stating that you support the signing of an EADRA.

Your response should also include reference to our opposition to any levy that places the responsibility for its collection on our volunteers.

Letter and emails should be sent to the executive officer of the horse community's submission:

Dr Diane Ryan

Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute, PMB Box 4008, Narellan, NSW 2567

Horse.EADRA@industry.nsw.gov.au

More information on EADRA and the suggested levy mechanisms can be found at

www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au and clicking on the Horse Industry and EADRA box

GREG BAILEY

PONY CLUB AUSTRALIA

NATIONAL PRESIDENT.