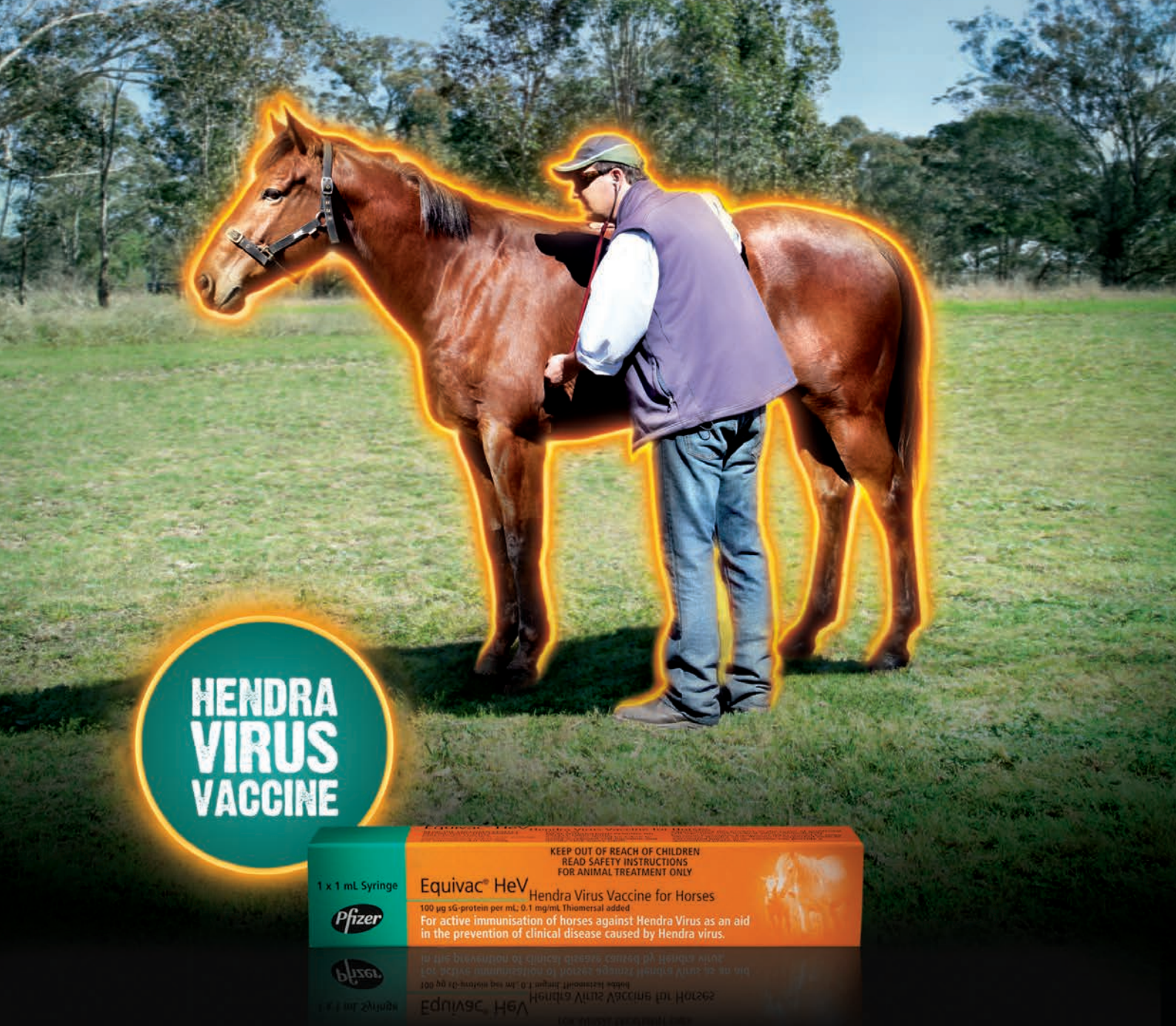


MYTH BUSTING Hendra Vaccine

MYTH: There's no risk of Hendra virus in my area

Hendra virus has been found in all four mainland species of flying foxes in Australia. These bats are found in all states and territories of the country, making exposure possible. For example, bats have tested positive to the Hendra Virus in Melbourne and more recently in South Australia, indicating exposure is possible.

There are many unknowns about how Hendra is contracted and bats can fly hundreds of kilometres in a few days – meaning that an apparent absence of bats on a property does not eliminate risk.

MYTH: Vaccinated horses can't be exported

Potential export restrictions apply only to a small number of countries in Asia and United Arab Emirates. There are only 300-400 horses exported to Hong Kong each year, and a similar number to the UAE. Vaccinated horses face no restrictions in travelling to NZ, EU, UK, and the Americas. Please refer to the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries website at: http://www.daff.gov.au/micor/live-animals to confirm the requirements for specific destinations.

EVA and Zoetis are working with DAFF and export countries to update the export requirements in light of the Hendra vaccine.

MYTH: The Hendra vaccine isn't safe in pregnant mares

It is important to note that the Hendra vaccine can be administered to pregnant mares under the advice of your veterinarian, but specific studies on pregnant mares are currently underway. This means that the decision to give the vaccine to a pregnant mare should be discussed with your veterinarian prior to administration.

There is no reason to believe the vaccine is unsafe and similar vaccines such as the vaccines for strangles, tetanus, herpes virus and rotavirus, are approved to be given to pregnant mares quite deliberately to provide protection to mares and their newborn foals.

MYTH: This is a 'trial' vaccine

The vaccine is currently administered under a Minor Use Permit. This is not a trial. The Minor Use Permit was granted because of the urgent need for this product to protect humans and horses in the face of continuing outbreaks. The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) is satisfied with all of the safety and efficacy data that was provided prior to vaccine release and has no doubts concerning the safety of the vaccine.

MYTH: The vaccine isn't safe

Data from the first 22,000 doses of the Hendra vaccine administered to horses resulted in only 55 reports from horse owners and veterinarians, with 53 horses categorised as having had a side-effect. The majority of these reports involved injection site swellings, which is not uncommon with any injection in a horse. The adverse event rate to date is approximately 0.24%, placing it in-line with the expected adverse event rate for most vaccines. None of the side-effects reported were serious, and all resolved.

MYTH: Some horses can't be vaccinated e.g. geldings

Any horse over the age of four months is eligible for vaccination. As discussed above, there are some specific situations where a discussion with your veterinarian is desirable prior to vaccination.

MYTH: The vaccine doesn't work

The Hendra virus vaccine has been rigorously tested with results demonstrating that vaccinated horses can withstand a dose of one million times the amount of virus likely to result from natural exposure from an infected bat. This vaccine is considered highly effective in the prevention of Hendra virus infection of a horse.

MYTH: Why do horses have to be micro-chipped?

It is essential that veterinarians, event organisers and government authorities know which horses are vaccinated and which aren't, especially in the face of an outbreak. The only reliable, practical and cost-effective means of identification is a via a microchip.

MYTH: My horse could catch Hendra virus from the vaccine

The vaccine contains no live virus, which is what would be required to cause an infection from vaccination. The vaccine's active ingredient is a tiny protein that is found on the surface of the virus, and this protein has been produced in a laboratory without having to harvest it directly from virus. Consequently there is zero risk of Hendra infection resulting from vaccination.

MYTH: The vaccine contains harmful additives

Vaccines of this type contain 'adjuvants' which assist the immune system to respond, and are essential to generate a protective immune response in the horse. The adjuvant used in the Hendra virus vaccine is of a type used in other animal vaccines over many years and is considered an excellent immune-stimulator.

It is also important that vaccines maintain a certain 'shelf-life' and consequently preservatives are added in tiny amounts to assist with this. The preservative used in this vaccine is common to many other animal vaccines and will not harm your horse.

MYTH: I've cut down all my trees so I won't get Hendra

It has been shown in recent outbreaks that not having trees or flying fox roosts on your property does not completely eliminate the risk of exposure. Vaccination is the most effective means available to aid in the prevention of infection.

MYTH: My horse needs a special 'Hendra' microchip

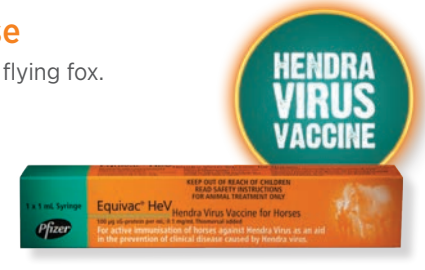
If a horse already has a readable microchip then there is no need to administer another chip.

MYTH: Only black flying foxes have been associated with disease

There is no evidence that potential outbreaks are limited to the habitats of specific species of flying fox.

MYTH: We would be better off to cull the bats

Bats are a critical component of our ecology, and culling them may do irreparable harm to our environment. It is worth remembering that bats are thought to shed more virus when stressed, and culling would lead to stress.



*Hendra vaccine, Equivac HeV, is only available under APVMA Minor Use Permit (PER13510).

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