



Media Release

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HORSE FLU TREATMENT HOPE

A SYDNEY vet at the heart of the equine flu crisis and a Queensland bio-tech company has formed an alliance to investigate a medical solution for the disease.

Dr Tim Roberts, the vet in charge of Sydney's Centennial Parkland Equestrian Centre, and animal plasma producer Plasvacc are awaiting permission from Animal Health Australia through AusVetPlan to draw plasma from infected horses at the Centennial Park stable.

It is hoped the infected horses have started to build immunity to the flu virus and plasma drawn from the horses could boost the immune systems of horses faced with the highly contagious disease that has devastated the industry.

Dr Roberts said he was cautiously optimistic the treatment collected from volunteer donors at the Centennial Parklands Equestrian Centre could provide a ray of hope for the industry.

Andrew Macarthur, the chief executive officer of Plasvacc, said antibody rich plasma was a proven way of combating the risk of many other infections, especially in new-born foals.

Plasvacc is Australia's leading producer of animal plasma products.

“We are looking for industry-wide support to fast-track this program to see if it can work,” Mr Macarthur said.

“Now more than ever, new-born foals need the proven benefits provided by antibody rich plasma to fight off the risk of equine influenza.”

Plasvacc's property “Rigby”, near Kalbar in South East Queensland, produces animal plasma drawn from donor animals that has widespread use in the animal health care industry.

Donor horses stabled at “Rigby” have been in quarantine lock-down since the flu virus hit Australian shores with devastating effect more than two weeks ago.

Visitors have been banned from entering the property while government-imposed quarantine measures last, while those employed at “Rigby” have to have themselves and their vehicles fully disinfected before entering the gates.

Meanwhile, Dr Roberts has cautioned the industry from embarking on an ad hoc program of vaccination.



“What we certainly do not need is people vaccinating their horses without approval from the Department of Primary Industries,” he said.

“If at some point we do decide to vaccinate it should be done in an orderly and systematic method with the correct strains of killed virus.

“We must all work together in this crisis because if we have people doing their own thing it will be far more expensive and take far longer to return to an EI-free status.”

Dr Roberts said he had support for the animal-plasma project from major players in the thoroughbred and pleasure horse industries.

Plasvacc's chief scientific officer Dr Ross Wilson, BVSc, said although a frustrated industry had been pointing fingers at those believed responsible for the outbreak, it was time for those in the industry to be patient and ensure the spread of the virus was contained.

“We are fully supportive of the steps taken by the authorities and the calling by the Federal Government of a fully independent inquiry into the matter,” Dr Wilson said.

“Until the findings of the inquiry are complete, we should be concentrating on what we can do now to treat sick horses and boost the immune systems of those which have not yet contracted the virus.

“We must be patient and get rid of this disease so it can be contained in the shortest time possible.”

Plasvacc's national sales manager, Ken Seibel, said veterinarians around the country had been telling him of the importance of the equine plasma therapy, especially now that the flu virus had a foothold in Australia.

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About Plasvacc

Based at *Rigby* on the Cunningham Highway, Kalbar, South-East Queensland and at *Oakbrook Farm* on Highway 101, Templeton, Central Coast California, Plasvacc is an Australian-owned veterinary pharmaceutical company that produces high quality hyperimmunised blood plasma products for animals such as horses, dogs, cattle, camels and alpacas.

All blood plasma products are licensed with regulatory authorities such as the USDA and the APVMA and plasma is collected from special donor herds of animals kept in strict quarantine on the properties. All plasma collection and processes are conducted under approved animal ethics guidelines.

Plasvacc's parent, Plasvacc Holdings Limited, is an unlisted public company based in Australia.



For more information on Plasvacc, go to: www.plasvacc.com and www.plasvaccusa.com

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