

Equine Influenza report from the President.

On the 25th of August Equine Influenza was reported in NSW and QLD, as a result Quarantine protocols were implemented by the relevant State DPI's. ACA committees who were running drafts in September, October and November began looking for answers, guidance and timelines. For the first 10 days I like most people were monitoring the progress of events daily. I was very reluctant to react to a situation particularly when emotions were running strong combined with rumours and conjecture therefore speculation was dangerous.

I am firm of the belief that the DPI who are responsible for the management of EI should be let do their job without the ACA compromising the spread of the virus. As the dust settled and people are understanding the virus more and coming to terms will the reality of the situation the future has started becoming a little clearer.

I have spoken to Ron Glanville (Chief Stock Inspector QDPI), NSW DPI and WA Dept of Ag a number of times throughout the 2nd week of EI with the view to gain some advice on the likelihood of when campdrafting could recommence safely and satisfactorily. I am a participant of a daily phone conference with horse industry leaders and the DPI which discuss a wide range of issues in relation to the management and containment of EI. Any advice given is with much caution especially with new out breaks occurring daily and the situation not showing signs of stabilizing plus the reported outbreaks in North Queensland and Hunter Valley adding to timelines being pushed back.

I have spoken to a cross section of competitors and all have indicated their reluctance of wanting to travel anywhere to campdrafts for fear of contacting the disease and the associated implications to their competitive horses health and to their breeding stock at home plus the possibility of being grounded at an event for an extended period. To the credit of committees wishing to run their event they felt an obligation to competitors to try and run their events especially the 3 major drafts in South Qld in October however the balancing act hasn't tipped their way.

In consultation with committees and the ACA vice-presidents assessing the information at hand it was decided by the executive on 8th of September to suspend campdrafting in QLD and NSW by ACA affiliated committees until December 31 2007. Therefore clear direction has been given for committees and competitors alike for planning purposes. This decision was not made lightly but responsible action needed to be taken in the best interests of all horses owners. The zoning system has just been implemented in an attempt to start the long road back to normality in Qld for movements of horses, this info is on the DPI website. The situation in NSW appears to be a bit slower in regards to the road to recovery. There is no guarantee the disease will have run its course by Dec 31 or alternatively it may have run its course much sooner and all restrictions lifted if that were the case then Dec 31 would be revised. Please speak to the office about rescheduling of your draft dates for the calendar.

How lucky were we not to have a lock down situation similar to Morgan Park at a campdraft?

Best Regards, ACA President – **Noel Chiconi.**