

Media Release
28 August 2007

EQUINE INFLUENZA UPDATE

Top Australian trainers Gai Waterhouse and Bart Cummings have been cleared of a possible outbreak of Equine Influenza within their prominent Randwick stables.

The news was met with massive relief throughout Australasia where so far no Thoroughbred or Standardbred horses have been contaminated with the highly contagious disease.

Despite the good news for Racing EI is still making its presence felt with 6 cases reported from a Sydney Police team, now facing up to two months in quarantine.

This brings the total number of horses affected by the disease to 58 on nine NSW properties and a further 615 horses in formal quarantine.

Here in New Zealand MAF Biosecurity officials have identified 97 horses from 55 properties, which have been imported from Australia since August 1. Where necessary, robust testing has been implemented with authorities increasingly confident the disease has not reached New Zealand shores.

New Zealand Racing Board Chief Executive Graeme Hansen has welcomed the news and was quick to commend the swift response by MAF officials in closing borders and protecting New Zealand's EI free record.

"We have already witnessed the devastating effects of Equine Influenza on not only racing, but the entire Equine Industry in Australia. I can't stress enough the importance of ensuring extreme measures of testing and prevention of the disease here in New Zealand."

Authorities are appealing to all travellers who come into contact with horses to remain extremely vigilant as the disease is easily transferred on clothing, equipment and vehicles.

Plans are underway in Australia to stage race meetings in States so far cleared of EI. Harness Racing Victoria has been granted permission to continue with plans to race at Moonee Valley this Friday night while the thoroughbred code is also hopeful of racing at the same venue with an extended programme on Saturday night along with Victoria's feature day meeting at Caulfield.

Other Australian states are hoping to getting racing underway at the weekend however NSW officials face another week of uncertainty as the reality of EI sets in.

"As the situation is changing frequently the New Zealand Racing Board is reviewing its current New Zealand race timetable on a daily basis. Timetables for New Zealand racing



have been adjusted to maximise opportunities to showcase the three New Zealand racing codes in the Australian Market,” said Mr Hansen.

Changes to the New Zealand racing schedules will be posted on www.tab.co.nz from 4pm. There will also be regular updates on Trackside Television and Radio.

ENDS

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