



NOTICE

EXPANSION OF AR 87 TO INCLUDE ALL INTRA-ARTICULAR INJECTIONS

Trainers and veterinarians are reminded of their obligations under the provisions of AR 87, which prohibits the administration of any intra-articular preparation to a Thoroughbred racehorse within 8 Clear Days of a race, official trial or jump-out.

The Racing Australia Veterinary and Analysts Committee (VAC) notes there is significant anecdotal evidence of the increasing use of anti-inflammatory and pain relieving medications – as an alternative to corticosteroids – being given by intra-articular (IA) injection, such as the opioid morphine or the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) ketorolac (Toradol), and IA desensitising substances such as ammonium sulphate (Nuromene) and polyacrylamide hydrogel which may have a neurotoxic mechanism of action.

VAC has expressed concern that the use of IA opioids and NSAIDs close to racing would promote significant analgesia (pain numbing effect) and compromise the welfare of the horse, and the safety of the rider, in at least the same way as a corticosteroid IA injection close to racing would. Substances such as P-block which have come to attention at recent inquiries are unregistered injections and as such should not be held by trainers under AR 252.

Further, participants are reminded that this enforced stand down period for intra-articular injections must not be confused with the recommended “withdrawal” time for the particular drug used and/or for the joint injected.

The withdrawal period for a prohibited substance is calculated to ensure a horse is presented clear of a prohibited substance when sampled. In the case of intra-articular corticosteroid injections, the withdrawal period will depend on the type and dose of corticosteroid used, as well as the joint(s) injected.

Therefore, trainers and their veterinarians must carefully consider the circumstances of each particular case before deciding upon the appropriate time of intra-articular injection before competition to ensure that the horse is presented without detectable residues of the corticosteroid/or other substance administered.

AR 87 Horses that have had an intra-articular injection

(1) If a horse has been subjected to an intra-articular injection:

(a) the horse is ineligible for; and

(b) a trainer must not enter or start the horse in, any race, official trial, or jump-out for 8 clear days following midnight on the day of the administration.

(2) If a horse has been subjected to, or the Stewards reasonably suspect a horse has been subjected to, an intra-articular injection at any time during the 8 clear days prior to the day of a race, official trial, or jump-out, the Stewards may order the scratching of the horse from the relevant event.

(3) If a horse has been nominated and/or entered for a race, official trial, or jump-out, a person must not:

(a) administer;

(b) cause to be administered;

(c) attempt to administer; or

(d) be party to the administration of, an intra-articular injection to the horse at any time within 8 clear days of the race, official trial, or jump-out.

Note: *By way of example, if a horse was subjected to an intra-articular injection at any time on a Monday (1st day of the month), the horse would be ineligible to race, trial or jump-out until the Wednesday of the following week (10th day of the month).*