



NOTICE

COBALT THRESHOLD IN THE AUSTRALIAN RULES OF RACING

Trainers are advised of the revised lower threshold level for cobalt in urine and a new threshold level for cobalt in blood plasma, effective 1 September 2016:

*“Schedule 1 – Prohibited Substances Lists, Part 2, Division 3 – Prohibited list B thresholds The following prohibited substances set out below in this Division 3 when present at or below their respective threshold are exempt from Prohibited List B -
(11) Cobalt at a mass concentration of 100 micrograms per litre in urine or 25 micrograms per litre in plasma.”*

Cobalt is a naturally occurring trace element which is normally present in horses at very low levels as a result of the ingestion of feedstuffs that contain it in trace amounts. Cobalt is also present in the structure of vitamin B12 (cyanocobalamin).

However, excessive amounts of cobalt have an effect on the blood system (Schedule 1, Part 2, Division 1 [1(i)]), and it would be classified as a haematopoietic agent (Schedule 1, Part 2, Division 1 [2(pp)]), and is a hypoxia inducible factor (HIF)-1 stabiliser (Schedule 1, Part 1, Division 1 (3)). Accordingly, cobalt is a prohibited substance pursuant to Schedule 1, Part 2, Division 1, 1(i.) and 2(pp.) and Schedule 1, Part 1, Division 1 (3) when occurring at levels above those naturally occurring or above those as a result of routine nutritional sources.

The threshold levels have been determined following an international survey of the racing horse population which measured cobalt levels in normal racehorses during training and racing. However, both the lowered urine cobalt threshold and the introduction of a plasma cobalt threshold provide a significantly more sensitive means of detecting the abuse of cobalt in racing.

Trainers are therefore advised:

- That a normal racing diet is more than sufficient to meet a horse’s nutritional requirements for cobalt and vitamin B12.
- That registered injectable therapeutic supplements containing cobalt such as V.A.M. Injection, Hemo-15 and Hemoplex offer no nutritional advantages because incorporation of cobalt into the vitamin B12 molecule occurs within the horse’s gut.
- To consult with their veterinarians to ensure that their oral supplementation regimen provides only the amount of cobalt necessary to meet the scientifically established nutritional requirements of the horse for cobalt.
- To administer only nutritional supplements that are manufactured or marketed by reputable companies and to administer such supplements only at the manufacturer’s recommended dose and frequency of administration.
- To avoid the simultaneous use of multiple registered therapeutic supplements containing cobalt and vitamin B12
- That administration of products that are inadequately labelled or non-compliant, that make claims to enhance racing performance or to be ‘undetectable’, or which are marketed over the internet is extremely unwise and may lead to penalty under the Rules of Racing.
- To comply with the one clear day restriction on the injection of any substance prior to racing.

Please direct any queries to the Stewards or Veterinary Department on (02) 9551 7500.

Approved by M Van Gestel GM Integrity 16/04/20
Replaces previous 11/07/16