



26 February 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The Australian National Racing Pigeon Board (ANRPB) was established in response to the Australian Federal Government's decision to update animal welfare codes and convert them into the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines.

Animal Health Australia (AHA) was commissioned to produce, via a consultancy process, Standards and Guidelines that now form an annexure to the ANRPB National Code of Practice for the keeping of racing pigeons.

In May 2016 an unknown virus outbreak caused high mortalities in racing pigeons in Perth WA. The virus was initially mis-diagnosed.

In December 2016 there was an outbreak of the virus in Melbourne, Victoria. Once again there was a high mortality rate amongst racing and show pigeons. Genetic testing identified that it was the same virus that had occurred in Perth; and was a Rotavirus.

Rotavirus has since spread throughout Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia killing many thousands of racing and show pigeons.

The ANRPB has supported the efforts of Melbourne veterinarian Dr Colin Walker and staff of AgriBio Vic/Latrobe University in developing a vaccine to protect racing and show pigeons against rotavirus.

With contracts now signed the rotavirus vaccine has reached the internal Research and Development of Manufacturing Stage at Treidlia Biovet where Dr Mark White is

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utilizing his considerable knowledge and skills in the development of vaccines to make the vaccine available prior to the racing and showing season in 2018.

The ANRPB fully supports Dr Mark White.

The ANRPB asks that decision makers take into consideration that pigeon owners Australia wide are quite experienced in vaccinating their birds against disease.

Since the introduction of Pigeon Paramyxovirus (PMV) in 2010, owners have been required to vaccinate their birds against this debilitating disease.

In most states owners are required to either sign a statutory declaration that their birds have been vaccinated against PMV; or have a minimum of two other fanciers present when their birds are vaccinated for PMV, who must sign to verify that the owner has vaccinated their birds in accordance with the manufacturers specifications. Newcastle Disease vaccine (used to prevent PMV) is available over the counter.

Hence pigeon owners have the knowledge, skills and experience to administer a PMV vaccine to the manufacturers specifications; with the backup of governance procedures in place. Therefore, the ANRPB would ask that consideration be given for permitting such arrangements for the rotavirus vaccine, i.e.; that the vaccine can be supplied directly to pigeon owners without the requirement to go through veterinarians.

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From the Australia wide pigeon fraternity perspective, the sooner the rotavirus vaccine becomes available the better as we need to stop the spread of a disease that has caused the death of many thousands of quite valuable birds.

Should you wish to clarify any issue raised in this correspondence please feel free to contact me on the number listed below.

Yours faithfully, for and on behalf of the Australian National Racing Pigeon Board Inc.


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Correspondence drafted by Greg Kakoschke and approved by Board members

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