

## **PRESS RELEASE - 17 AUGUST 2006**

### **Equine Dental Treatment under the Proposed Veterinary Practice Regulation 2006 (NSW)**

#### **Association of Equine Dental Practitioners (Aust) Inc.**

**Assistant Secretary Peter Borgdorff**

**peter@equinedentalpractice.com ph 0414 566 789**

#### **ORAL CARE OR AWFUL CARE?**

Many experienced equine veterinarians have for many years worked together with properly trained equine dentists to ensure horses receive good quality oral and related care. There are two equine dental associations whose members have intensive training of at least 6 months followed by full-time industry experience. They do not use potentially harmful, non water-cooled power files or perform routine incisor cutting and excessive molar smoothing. Treatment requiring sedation or complex procedures have always been conducted by our members in conjunction with veterinary surgeons.

A small group of equine veterinarians is behind the push for all but basic cleaning and filing to be carried out by veterinary surgeons, making even routine procedures such as removal of loose baby teeth and any kind of diagnostic work unlawful in NSW. Ironically, some of the major forces behind this anti-competitive push have taken a controversial, very short 'equine dental technician' course in the US and now promote 3 day training workshops and sell power tools with the apparent blessing of the Equine Veterinary Association.

There have been cases in the past where unqualified persons and qualified persons, including vets, have made incorrect diagnoses and performed inappropriate work, such as excessive filing, not filing enough or evenly, overheating teeth and using inappropriate equipment. There is a need to protect the horse and ensure a higher standard of dental care is being provided. This can be achieved through the standards enforced by the Equine Dental Practitioners Board. This Board is being established as a result of our association's initiatives.

## **WHAT IS PROPOSED**

New legislation is being rushed through without adequate or public consultation as a Regulation under the Veterinary Practice Act 2003 (NSW). Part of this legislation proposes that certain activities will be restricted as acts of veterinary science, meaning they may virtually only be conducted by veterinarians or animal researchers. Activities among many to be restricted are:

- Examination of or attendance of an animal for the purpose of diagnosing the physiological or pathological condition of an animal, including diagnosing pregnancy in the horse but not in other animals.
- Any treatment, procedure or test that involves the insertion of any thing into certain body cavities such as the alveolus of the tooth or other synovial cavities (horse 'tubing' exempted).
- Treatment, procedures or test such as the performing dental procedures except tooth cleaning and rasping.

## **WHAT THIS WILL MEAN**

Properly trained equine dentists in NSW, such as our members, may **not**, for instance:

- Diagnose or treat minor but important ailments to prevent dental disease
- Examine for, or diagnose common periodontal disease
- Conduct the majority of treatment in preparation for filing, such as the extraction of caps (milk teeth)
- Remove diseased teeth or wolf teeth
- Clean feed from diastemata (pockets between teeth)
- Cut teeth that are extended beyond the level of adjacent teeth

**None** of this work may **ever** be done by a trained equine dentist, not even with a veterinary surgeon present.

## **WHAT WE PROPOSE**

The Association of Equine Dental Practitioners (Aust) has a rigid Code of Practice in place. This Code of Practice emphasizes the welfare of the horse and specifies which procedures may be conducted under which circumstances. This covers requirements for veterinary attendance and collaboration. All adequately trained equine dentists are to be licensed by the Equine Dental Practitioners Board currently being established.

---