

INDUSTRY NOTICE – HARNESS RACING REVISED URINE and NEW PLASMA THRESHOLDS FOR COBALT

Cobalt is a naturally occurring trace element which may normally be 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, it is known that excessive amounts of cobalt have an effect on the blood system and therefore it can also be considered as a prohibited substance according to the Rules of Racing when it is at levels above those naturally occurring or as a result of routine nutritional sources, thus a threshold level was introduced into the Rules of Harness Racing to control the use of cobalt in race horses.

Please be aware that:

1. The urine threshold for cobalt will be lowered from 200 micrograms per litre ($\mu\text{g/L}$) to $100\mu\text{g/L}$ with effect from 1st November 2016.

2. A plasma threshold of $25\mu\text{g/L}$ will also be implemented from 1st November 2016. 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.

Therefore trainers are 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 cobalt supplements 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 supplements containing cobalt and vitamin B12.
- That administering products that are inadequately labelled, that make claims to enhance racing performance or to be 'undetectable', or which are marketed over the internet is extremely unwise.
- To comply with the one clear day restriction on the injection of any substance prior to racing.

Whilst the threshold has been set at a level to allow for normal levels of cobalt supplementation through routine nutritional sources, trainers are advised that the administration of certain registered vitamin supplements, particularly by injection, close to racing may result in a level of cobalt in a subsequent

sample that exceeds this threshold. Trainers are therefore advised to avoid the use of these supplements close to racing.

Examples of injectable vitamin supplements that contain cobalt and/or vitamin B12 include, but are not limited, to V.A.M. injection, Hemo-15 and Hemoplex.

Please direct any inquiries to the RWWA Veterinary Department or the Stewards.