



## **ELEVATED TCO2 LEVELS POLICY - NOTICE TO TRAINERS**

*Below is an initiative from HRV Stewards regarding the presentation or retention of horses on course where the analysis of a previous blood sample taken from that horse or that trainers horse(s) has revealed an elevated TCO2 level.*

### **Background**

For there to be a breach of the prohibited substance rules in regard to the elevated TCO2 in a blood sample taken from a horse, the level needs to exceed 37mmol/L (36mmol/L +/-1mmol/L).

Results of blood samples consistently reveal elevated TCO2 levels, however they fall just below the threshold and therefore no action can be taken. This indicates that trainers are administering alkalinising agents on raceday.

For a number of years HRNSW have required horses that return elevated TCO2 levels to be presented on course at an earlier time than normally required. The feedback from this strategy is that it has had a positive impact on reducing the number of elevated TCO2 results.

As a result the HRV Stewards believe that by introducing the below requirement it will act as a deterrent to those trainers who are administering alkalinising agents on raceday.

Where a blood sample is collected from a horse, and that sample returns a plasma total carbon dioxide (TCO2) level greater than 35.1 mmol/L, the HRV Stewards will implement one of the below options for that horses next 3 race starts.

The selected option may be altered for each race start at the discretion of the HRV Stewards.

### **Option 1**

1. The trainer of the relevant horse shall ensure it is present **on course no less than 4 hours** prior to the scheduled start time in which the horse is entered at a Victorian Harness Racing meeting.

2. Should a trainer fail to present the horse by the required time the horse shall be withdrawn from the race and the trainer may be subject to penalty.
3. Should the horse be transferred to another trainer within the period of 3 starts the new trainer can make application for the restrictions to be lifted by the HRV Stewards.
4. HRV will publish a list on its website of all horses required to be presented under this policy.

### **Option 2**

1. The horse which returned an elevated TCO2 level shall be retained on course for a minimum of 3 hours after the horse has completed its scheduled race at a Victorian Harness Racing meeting.
2. Should a trainer fail to abide by this requirement the trainer may be subject to a penalty.
3. Should the horse be transferred to another trainer within the period of 3 starts the new trainer can make application for the restrictions to be lifted by HRV Stewards.
4. HRV will publish a list on its website of all horses required to be presented under this policy.

### **Option 3**

1. The Stewards shall attend the registered training address of the trainer of the horse which returned the elevated TCO2 level for as long as is deemed reasonably necessary on the day of the race to supervise the pre-race preparation of the subject horse(s) when engaged at a Victorian Harness Race meeting. The intention of this action is to disrupt and prevent the likelihood of any race day treatment occurring.
2. Should a trainer fail to abide or hinder this requirement the trainer may be subject to penalty.
3. Should the horse be transferred to another trainer within the period of 3 starts the new trainer can make application for the restrictions to be lifted by HRV Stewards.

4. HRV will publish a list on its website of all horses required to be presented under this policy.

**One of the above options will be chosen at the discretion of the Stewards** as there will be consideration given to factors which will include, but not be limited to, current intelligence, venue of the race meeting and other options that may have been utilised in respect of that horse and/or licensed trainer.

Trainers may seek to spell the horse while these obligations are in place and Stewards shall enforce these options irrespective of the time taken for the 3 starts to elapse.

Trainers may also seek to race the subject horse in quick succession in order for their obligations to be completed as soon as possible. At this stage there will be no minimum time period allocated for such obligations to be completed by the trainer, however Stewards will review this policy within 6 months and if deemed necessary make necessary changes after further consultation with the Victorian Trainers and Drivers Association (VTDA).