



INQUIRY INTO THE ANALYSTS FINDING OF NAPROXEN IN THE PRE-RACE BLOOD SAMPLE TAKEN FROM FERNIEHIRST PRIOR THE GELDING BEING PLACED 2ND IN THE NRRRA COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS QUALIFIER CONDUCTED AT GRAFTON ON 11 MARCH 2018.

Coffs Harbour Racecourse

Thursday 5 April 2018

**Stewards: M Holloway (Chairman)
P Dingwall
N Daniels**

The Stewards today inquired into the findings by the Australian Racing Forensic Laboratory (ARFL) and Racing Analytical Services Limited (RASL) of naproxen in a pre-race blood sample taken from the Paul Smith trained Ferniehurst, prior to the gelding being placed 2nd in the NRRRA Country Championships Qualifier conducted at Grafton on 11 March 2018.

Evidence today was taken from licensed trainer Mr Paul Smith, part owners of Ferniehurst Mr Barry Kerr and Mr Lindsey Kerr, Racing NSW Senior Official Veterinarian Dr Craig Suann, ARFL Science Manager Dr Adam Cawley, RASL Laboratory Director Mr David Batty, Veterinarian Dr Tessa Birch and Racing NSW Swab Official Ms Julie Clark.

The following matters were established during today's Inquiry

1. On 28 March 2018, Racing NSW Stewards were advised of an irregularity to naproxen in respect to the pre-race blood sample taken from Ferniehurst on 11 March 2018
2. On 29 March 2018, Racing NSW Stewards conducted an unannounced stable inspection of Mr Smith's stables at Coffs Harbour, at which time Mr Smith was informed of the sample irregularity. During the inspection, Racing NSW Stewards obtained treatment records from Mr Smith for the relevant period.
3. During the inspection it was established that Mr Smith was taking the human medicine INZA 250 for pain relief for a shoulder injury. Stewards dispatched the substance to the ARFL for analysis. Analysis of the INZA 250 exhibit confirm the presence of naproxen.
4. On 29 March 2018 and 4 April 2018 Racing NSW Stewards received certificates from the ARFL and RASL respectively confirming the presence of naproxen in the pre-race blood sample.

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5. The ARFL reported that analysis of a post-race urine sample taken from Ferniehurst on 11 March 2018 did not confirm the presence of naproxen in that sample.
6. Dr Cawley advised the inquiry that the approximate level of naproxen detected by the ARFL in the blood sample taken from Ferniehurst was 9ng/ml.
7. Dr Batty advised the inquiry that the approximate level of naproxen detected by RASL in the reserve blood sample taken from Ferniehurst was 10ng/ml.
8. The screening limit set by Racing Australia in accordance with AR178EA for naproxen is 250ng/ml in urine. There is currently no official screening limit for naproxen in blood.
9. Dr Suann gave evidence to the inquiry that in his opinion the levels of naproxen detected in the pre-race blood sample by the ARFL and RASL were low trace levels and in his expert opinion should not be considered to be the detection of a prohibited substance. In providing that opinion Dr Suann had regard to peer reviewed published studies which provided guidance as to a possible screening limit in plasma for naproxen.
10. Stewards found that the most likely cause of the analyst's findings were due to stable contamination.

Stewards Findings

Having regard to the expert opinion of Racing NSW Senior Official Veterinarian Dr Craig Suann that the analyst's findings should not be considered to be the detection of a prohibited substance in the pre-race blood sample taken from Ferniehurst, together with the evidence of Dr Adam Cawley that naproxen could not be confirmed in the post-race urine sample taken from Ferniehurst, the Stewards found that the findings of the ARFL and RASL did not constitute the detection of a prohibited substance under the Rules of Racing.

Mr Smith was advised that in circumstances whereby he is taking medication that contains a prohibited substance he must ensure that he takes all reasonable precautions with his stable practices to prevent the possibility of contamination.

M Holloway
Chairman of Stewards-NRRA