



AMENDMENTS TO AUSTRALIAN RULES OF RACING

AR 88A & AR 88AA Bisphosphonates

Summary:

Bisphosphonates are drugs that inhibit the normal biological mechanism for bone maintenance/repair, which can lead to an accumulation of micro-damage and bone fragility.

Bisphosphonates can also cause retention of calcified growth cartilage in skeletally immature animals, leading to developmental orthopaedic disease.

To compound these issues, bisphosphonates are potent analgesics and may disguise the signs of underlying serious orthopaedic injuries such as stress fractures in young animals.

Racing Australia advises that, for these reasons, bisphosphonates should never be used in young, skeletally immature, athletic horses.

Racing Australia also notes the ratification of the IFHA position (under Articles 6D and 6E of the International Agreement on Breeding Racing and Wagering), which is to:

- ban the administration of bisphosphonates to horses under the age of 3 years and 6 months; and
- prohibit administration of bisphosphonates to a horse on the day of a race or on any of the 30 days before the day of the race in which the horse is declared to run.

Racing Australia believes it is prudent for the Australian rules to adopt an age of 4 years (by calendar year/season of birth) as a more rational way of clearly demarcating to which horses this rule applies.

Accordingly, two new rules restricting the use of bisphosphonates in the racing industry have been introduced in respect of horses aged less than 4 years and 4 years or older.

1. Add New Rule 88A as follows:

“AR 88A Horses (less than 4 years) treated with bisphosphonates

- (1) This rule only applies to horses that are aged less than 4 years at the time of the relevant administration or attempted administration.
- (2) A person must not:
 - (a) administer;
 - (b) cause to be administered;
 - (c) attempt to administer; or
 - (d) be a party to an administration or attempted administration of, any bisphosphonate to a horse aged less than 4 years.
- (3) A horse that has been subjected to an administration of any bisphosphonate is:
 - (a) ineligible to participate in any race, official trial, jump-out or trackwork for a minimum of 12 months from the date of administration; and
 - (b) not permitted to race until 1 August of the year the horse turns 4.
- (4) If a horse is subjected to an administration of any bisphosphonate:
 - (a) the trainer or owner of the horse (or his or her authorised agent) must, as soon as practicable after such administration, notify the Stewards;
 - (b) the Stewards shall then ensure that details of such administration and the horse's ineligibility to race are recorded in Racing Australia's national online database.
- (5) A person must not:
 - (a) enter or run a horse in a race, official trial, jump-out or trackwork in contravention of subrule (3); or
 - (b) fail to notify the Stewards as required by subrule (4)(a).
- (6) It is a defence to a charge laid under subrule (5) that the person was not aware, and should not reasonably have been aware, that the horse had been subjected to an administration of any bisphosphonate.
- (7) For the purposes of this rule, a bisphosphonate includes but is not limited to tiludronic acid (disodium tiludronate) or clodronic acid (clodronate disodium tetrahydrate).
- (8) Nothing in this rule affects Prohibited List A, which includes zoledronic acid and any other bisphosphonates not registered for veterinary use in Australia.”

Date of effect: 1 February 2023

2. Add New Rule 88AA as follows:

“AR 88AA Horses (4 years or older) treated with bisphosphonates

- (1) This rule only applies to horses that are aged 4 years or older at the time of the relevant administration or attempted administration.
- (2) A horse that has been subjected to an administration of any bisphosphonate is ineligible to participate in any race, official trial or jump-out at any time during the 30 clear days following midnight on the day of the administration.
- (3) Where a horse has been nominated and/or entered for a race, official trial or jump-out, a person must not:
 - (a) administer;
 - (b) cause to be administered;
 - (c) attempt to administer; or
 - (d) be a party to an administration or attempted administration of, any bisphosphonate to the horse at any time within 30 clear days of the race, official trial or jump-out.
- (4) A trainer must not enter or run a horse in any race, official trial or jump-out where the horse has been subjected to an administration of any bisphosphonate during the 30 clear days prior to the day of the race, official trial or jump-out.
- (5) Where:
 - (a) a horse has been subjected to an administration of any bisphosphonate at any time during the 30 clear days prior to the day of a race, official trial or jump-out; or
 - (b) the Stewards reasonably suspect that there has been such an administration (as referred to in subrule (5)(a)),the Stewards may order the scratching of the horse from the relevant race, official trial or jump-out.
- (6) For the purposes of this rule, a bisphosphonate includes but is not limited to tiludronic acid (disodium tiludronate) or clodronic acid (clodronate disodium tetrahydrate).
- (7) Nothing in this rule affects Prohibited List A, which includes zoledronic acid and any other bisphosphonates not registered for veterinary use in Australia.

Date of effect: 1 February 2023