



STEWARDS REPORT

INQUIRY IN RELATION TO A STABLE INSPECTION CONDUCTED BY RACING NSW STEWARDS AND INVESTIGATORS
OF LICENSED TRAINER MELISSA DENNETT'S PREMISES ON FRIDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2025

Stewards Room – Tamworth Racecourse

24 February 2025

Stewards: J P W Prior (Chair), S G Railton & D R Hadley

Racing NSW Stewards today conducted an inquiry in relation to an inspection undertaken by Stewards and Investigators of trainer Melissa Dennett's licensed stable premises on the morning of Friday 14 February 2025. During the inspection it was identified that the horses *Apparently*, *Haiku Star*, *Super Sioux*, *Takanakuy* and *Winged*, all of which were engaged to race at the Tamworth race meeting later that day had, on Wednesday 12 February 2025, been injected with the product Troy Hemoplex which contains cobalt salts. During the inspection one bottle of Hemoplex was seized.

Prior to the commencement of the Tamworth race meeting on 14 February 2025, Stewards ordered that the aforementioned horses be withdrawn from their respective engagements acting under the provisions of AR252A(3).

At today's hearing, evidence was taken from Ms Dennett and licensed stable employee Mr Brody Cummins. A brief of evidence, provided by Racing NSW Investigators was also considered.

At the inquiry it was established that *Apparently* had previously been injected with Hemoplex on 4 January 2025 prior to racing at Tamworth on 6 January 2025 and that *Winged* had previously been injected with Hemoplex on 11 January 2025 prior to racing at Tamworth on 23 January 2025. On the available evidence, Stewards were satisfied that Ms Dennett was not using Hemoplex to seek an unfair advantage but rather she had failed to familiarise herself with published warnings and notices and was not aware that the injectable product Hemoplex contained cobalt salts.

The following charges were issued:

Charge 1

AR 252A(1) - The details of the charge being that Ms Dennett did, on Friday 14 February 2025, have on her licenced stable premises a bottle of Hemoplex, an injectable product which contains cobalt salts.

Plea: Guilty

Charge 2

AR254A(1)(a) - The details of the charge being that Ms Dennett, did administer by intravenous injection the product Hemoplex, which contains cobalt salts, to the following horses: -

- *Apparently* – 10ml – I.V. on 12 February 2025
- *Haiku Star* – 10ml – I.V. on 12 February 2025

- Winged – 10ml – I.V. on 12 February 2025
- Takanakuy – 10ml – I.V. on 12 February 2025
- Super Sioux – 10ml – I.V. on 12 February 2025
- Winged – 15ml – I.V. on 11 January 2025
- Apparently – 10ml – I.V. on 4 January 2025

Plea: Guilty

Charge 3

AR 104 - The details of the charge being that Ms Dennett did fail to record full treatment details as required under AR104(2)(b), (g) and (h) in respect of various treatments given to horses under her care and that she did also fail to keep treatment records for a period of two years prior to 14 February 2025.

Plea: Guilty

Penalty

Stewards gave consideration to the following matters when determining penalty:

- 1) Guilty plea to each charge
- 2) Full cooperation and transparency during the investigation
- 3) Ms Dennett having held a trainer's license for 8 years
- 4) Her good disciplinary record and no prior offences under the relevant rules
- 5) The product Hemoplex was being administered in a way which was not intended to seek an unfair advantage but rather for the horse's general welfare
- 6) The principles of individual and general deterrence
- 7) Notifications/warnings issued by Racing NSW in respect to injectable products, such as Hemoplex, containing cobalt salts
- 8) Precedent penalties

Penalty Charge 1 – AR252A(1) – \$1000 fine reduced to \$750 for guilty plea and other relevant considerations

Penalty Charge 2 – AR254A(1)(d) – Stewards determined that the appropriate starting point for the offence under AR254A(1)(d) be a fine of \$10,000. However, giving consideration to all relevant matters including Ms Dennett's guilty plea, Stewards determined that Ms Dennett be fined the sum of \$6000.

Penalty Charge 3 – AR104 – \$1000 fine reduced to \$750 for guilty plea and other relevant considerations

In total, Ms Dennett was fined \$7500.

Ms Dennett was advised of her rights of appeal.

Consideration of the provisions under AR254A(3)

Under the provisions of AR254A(3) a horse which has been administered a product containing cobalt salts by injection may be disqualified from a race, official trial or jump-out in which it has competed.

Stewards considered the following factors when determining if the horses *Apparently* and *Winged*, which had competed on 4 January 2025 and 11 January 2025, respectively, after being injected with Hemoplex, should be disqualified from the races in which they ran.

- the low level of cobalt contained within Hemoplex;
- samples obtained from Ms Dennett's horses in the past, when analysed, revealed a level of cobalt within normal parameters; and
- the nature in which the administration of Hemoplex by Ms Dennett was intended to increase recovery after gallops as opposed to seeking an unfair advantage from the level of cobalt contained within Hemoplex.

Having regard to these matters, Stewards determined that the provisions of AR254A(3) should not be enacted and the horses under Mr Dennett's care which had been injected with Hemoplex and subsequently competed should not be disqualified.

J P W Prior

Chief Steward

Hunter & North West Racing Association

Relevant Rules:

AR 252A Possession of injectable products containing cobalt salts

(1) A person must not have in his or her possession, or on his or her premises, any injectable product which contains cobalt salts.

AR254A administration of cobalt salts by injection

(1) A person must not:

(a) Administer a product containing cobalt salts to horse by injection.

AR 254A Administration of cobalt salts by injection

(3) If a horse has been administered a product containing cobalt salts by injection, but the horse competes in a race, official trial or jump-out, the horse may be disqualified from that race, official trial or jump-out.

AR 104 Trainers must keep treatment records

(2) For the purpose of subrule (1), each record of administration must include the following information:

(b) the date and time of administration of the treatment or medication;

(g) the name and signature of the person/s administering and/or authorising the administration of the treatment or medication;

(h) the reason for administering the treatment or medication.

(5) All records required to be kept in accordance with this rule must be retained by the trainer for at least 2 years.