



# AHSA Drug Testing Control System

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# 1. AHSA Drug Testing Policy

Horses competing in an AHSA competition must not compete under the influence of prohibited medications. The FEI defines what a prohibited substance is in the FEI veterinary regulations. The AHSA agrees and uses the same definition. The AHSA Drug Testing Control System describes requirements for the drug testing of horses and ponies.

Medication control sampling (swabbing) is compulsory at the following events/occasions:

- Australian Arabian National Championships
- All AA Graded Shows (at least three horses or three percent of the horses taking part, whichever is the greater)

Medication control sampling (swabbing) is recommended/permitted at the following events:

- AHSA A Graded event
- Any other event conducted by an Affiliate

## 2. Event Planning Summary

Organisers of events at which medication control/sampling of horses is to take place, must in consultation with the AHSA, plan the following:

1. The presence at the event of appropriately qualified personnel, including a Veterinarian and a suitably informed/ trained Swabbing Steward.
2. Access to a “swabbing box” or similar facility in which samples can be collected at the event
3. Availability of an adequate number of sample collection kits and equipment. Kits are to be arranged by the vet and bought to the event by the vet,
4. The method of selection of horses, unless left to the Vet of the day. The Swabbing Steward should not be involved in the selection of horses for drug testing
5. Financial budgeting for the required sampling

## 3. Qualified Personnel

The shoe Organising committee must ensure an experienced swabbing vet is engaged and it is the responsibility of the committee to have a suitably instructed swabbing steward.

## 4. Supply of Sample Collection Kits

Sample Collection kits will need to be ordered by the appointed veterinarian.

Upon arrival, the Swabbing Steward or the vet, must check the kit(s) to ensure that the expiry dates are current. The ID number must also be checked. It is the duty of the Veterinarian or the Swabbing Steward to bring the kit(s) to the event.

Sample kits come in a security bag, which has a tamper evident seal at the end of the zipper. The security bag has been sealed with a uniquely numbered tamper evident seal. The seal is ONLY broken and the bag opened IMMEDIATELY prior to the collection of samples AT THE COMPETITION. The opening of the bag must occur in the presence of the sample collection officials (usually the veterinarian and the Swabbing Steward) overseeing the collection of samples and the Person Responsible. All kits, whether used or unused, must be returned to the laboratory.

Some laboratories also supply (usually on request) large disposable plastic cups and a holder with a handle for the collection of urine. The use of these is not mandatory, but a washed purpose built urine catching receptacle is required.

## 5. On-site Facilities

It is preferable to have a separate stable dedicated to the collection of samples. This “swabbing box” should be in a quiet and private area, be clean and have a supply of fresh straw/sawdust in it. There should be chairs for Person Responsible, veterinarian and steward(s) and a table on which the sampling kits can be processed.

In the absence of such facility, the sampling can be done in other areas, preferable in an area with which the person responsible and sampling personnel are comfortable. This area must be isolated and quiet, and safe for the horse and handlers.

## 6. The Selection of Horses to be sampled

Normally, as the analysis of samples is expensive, the organising committee determines the number of samples that are to be taken.

The AHSA maintains a Drug Testing Control Program System that ensures that drug testing (swabbing) is carried out in conformance with requirements listed below.

There are many methods for selecting horses to be swabbed at AHSA events and competitions. Only horses where the Person Responsible is an **AHSA member** can be selected for swabbing. Where Medication control takes place at an Affiliate competition, Affiliate members may also be included.

The Show Committee may delegate the responsibility to the veterinarian to decide upon the method of selection. The selection processes available to the veterinarian /Event Organising Committee include any of the following:

1. Horses may be chosen specifically because their behaviour raises suspicion, in other words, they appear drugged or under the effect of medication (deemed a “spot test”)
2. Horses may be chosen at random from all competitors entered, or chosen at random from a group of winners or placegetters (deemed a random selection)
3. Horses may be chosen because they are winners or placegetters (deemed a “required selection”)
4. Horses may be chosen at a judge’s request (deemed a “spot test”)
5. The Show Committee may delegate the responsibility to the Veterinarian, the Chief Steward (not the Swabbing Steward) to decide upon the method of selection or select the horse(s)

## **7. Reporting of Results**

The reporting of the sample results will only be made to the Secretary of the Arabian Horse Society of Australia.

The show committee are only informed of the sample results at the discretion of the AHSA Board. This would not usually occur until after a judicial enquiry (if needed) or after the Person Responsible has been informed.

## **8. List of approved Laboratories**

These are the Approved Laboratories within Australia:

NSW: Australian Racing Forensics  
Laboratory (REFERENCE LABORATORY)  
Royal Randwick Racecourse  
Randwick NSW 2031  
Ph: 02 8344 5000

## **9. Other Contact Detail**

Secretary  
The Arabian Horse Society of Australia Ltd.  
Post Office Box 415,  
Richmond NSW 2753

## **10. Notification and Supervision**

The Swabbing Steward or a trained assistant seeks out the selected rider/horse combinations without significantly interfering with their competition or preparation. Horses may be sampled at any time during competition. Horses may be sampled more than once.

The riders/drivers/handlers (responsible person's) are notified and swabbed immediately after they have finished competing or have taken part in the presentation of prizes or within 30 minutes of the announcement of the competition results. Where a horse is suspected of a being affected by an irritant to enhance tail carriage the Ring marshal can request that the swabbing steward escort the horse for a swab prior to the class. The class must be held to allow the return of the horse. Responsible Persons may be notified up to 30 minutes after the finish of competition.

The handler/rider or owner or their designated representative (hereafter termed the Responsible Person or RP) must stay with the horse from the point of notification until the sampling procedure is completed. When the RP is not an adult (18 years old or over), they must be accompanied by a guardian.

The Swabbing steward must notify the RP formally by handing the RP the completed and signed AHSA Drug Testing Notification form. The RP MUST complete and sign the AHSA Drug Testing Notification form.

The horse must then be accompanied by the Swabbing Steward at all times after notification. The Swabbing Steward should supervise the selected horse from the moment the RP is notified and until the swabbing process has been completed. The horse must not be allowed to eat or be administered any medication, until after sampling is complete. The horse may be hosed down, may have its tack removed and may be presented quickly for photographs before making its way to the sampling box/area. However, after notification the RP must present the horse at the swabbing area as soon as possible for sample collection.

A refusal or willful obstruction by any person to submit a horse for sampling must be reported immediately to the Event Organising Committee. If the Committee decides there are no grounds for such a refusal or obstruction, and the Responsible Person persists, the horse must be disqualified from the entire event. The matter must be reported in writing to the Secretary of the AHSA.

Once at the swab box/area, the identity of the horse should be confirmed in the best way possible. The veterinarian must identify the horse against AHSA or relevant breed registration papers or if they are absent, confirm the exhibitor number and catalogue details with the RP or write a description on the forms provided.

## **11. The Sampling Process**

The veterinarian/steward must open the swab kits in the presence of the RP, conduct the wash-through procedure and sample the horse, waiting for urination for no more than one (1) hour. Detailed procedures for the use of sampling kits may vary from kit to kit, lab to lab. Please consult the appropriate laboratory resource material provided with the sample kits.

The length of wait for urine must not exceed 1 hour but may be shortened if the sampling officials are of the opinion that an expedited collection of urine is not probable. If the horse becomes dangerous then the sampling procedure may be curtailed or abandoned by the approval of the sampling officials.

## **12. AHSA Swabbing Stewards Personal Kit**

All EA Swabbing Stewards should obtain a personal kit, which should contain the following:

- 1) Identity badge (provided by the Show Committee)
- 2) Swabbing sample kit(s)
- 3) Scissors
- 4) Stapler
- 5) Collection pan/urine collector
- 6) File/notebook
- 7) Pens
- 8) Plastic Gloves
- 9) Sunscreen lotion
- 10) Sun hat or cap
- 11) Swabbing Procedures
- 12) Spare coded seals to close the sample kit
- 13) Where available, the Laboratory's Sample Collection Procedures Booklet (It is advisable to read this booklet thoroughly and carry it with you on swabbing days.)
- 14) EA Notification Forms
- 15) Blank Horse Identification Forms
- 16) Express Post Envelopes for paperwork return to the AHSA Office
- 17) Express Post secure bags for the posting of samples to the Laboratory (if needed)

Upon arrival at grounds, check that the following are available:

- 1) Swabbing Area/Stable is available/clean/ready
- 2) Competitor List/Event program (the ground jury/event organiser, must supply the swabbing team with an event program and competitor listing upon request)
- 3) The Swabbing Steward, a member of the ground jury or event coordinator and veterinarian must meet to discuss procedures for the day

## **13. After Sampling Completion**

As soon as possible after a sample is taken and sealed, it needs to be kept chilled or frozen in a suitable secure (locked) cooler container or refrigerator. This is to ensure the biological integrity of the sample

Used and unused sample kits are to remain in the custody of the Swabbing steward or the Veterinarian

Arrangements for delivery/sending of the samples on the first working day after the competition/event are essential

When swabbing samples are sent from a distance, then they should be express registered posted or courier freighted back to the approved laboratory

## **14. Risk Management Measures**

To ensure that PR is confident that the correct processes have been followed and need not be challenged, the following measures should be observed:

- 1) The Swabbing Steward should not be involved in the selection of horse to be swabbed
- 2) The RP must have a clear view of all procedures and be given an explanation about each step of the process
- 3) Only a Veterinarian is to take blood; either the veterinarian or the Swabbing Steward may take the urine samples
- 4) Stewards should be well versed with regulations, procedures and equipment required
- 5) The Swabbing Steward is ultimately responsible for the swabbing conducted, and will be scrutinised more than the competitor
- 6) Identification of the horse should be through a suitable I.D. like the horse's registration papers or confirming the catalogue/program details and exhibit number with the RP.
- 7) Stewards need to be consistent with their procedures
- 8) The Swabbing Steward should ensure the veterinary surgeon has disposed of sharps into a sharps container
- 9) Security for the completed kits/chain of custody