



AMENDMENTS TO AUSTRALIAN RULES OF RACING

Amendment - AR 2, AR 87

Background:

VAAG reports that there are inherent risks associated with the administration of injections into intra-synovial cavities (joints, tendon sheaths and others), as these are normally sterile environments. The procedure requires in-depth knowledge of the horse's anatomy and of the principles of aseptic technique and is usually performed with the aid of appropriate restraining techniques, which may include chemical sedation (which can only be performed by registered veterinary surgeons or under direct veterinary supervision). The technique has been associated with a variety of documented complications, some of which have resulted in the subsequent euthanasia of affected horses.

For the reasons stated above, it is proposed by VAAG to broaden the rule on intra-articular injections to incorporate injections into all synovial cavities, including joints and tendon sheaths.

As for intra-articular injections, similar concerns based on horse welfare and racing safety exist for injections into synovial structures more generally.

It is proposed that intra-synovial injections be restricted to being performed by registered veterinary surgeons for diagnostic or treatment purposes.

VAAG Recommendation

It is noted that the term "intra-synovial" includes the term "intra-articular" but is also wider and includes other "cavities" such as (joints, tendon sheaths and others). VAAG recommended;

- to add a definition for intra-synovial injection and,
- to amend AR87 by replacing the term "intra-articular" with "intra-synovial" and adding subrules (4) – [limiting intra-synovial injections to qualified veterinarians] & (5) – [qualification regarding "injection"].

COSC consideration

COSC considered the VAAG recommendations at their meeting of 23 April 2025 to amend AR87 as proposed and to introduce a new definition for intra-synovial injection, which was unanimously supported.

Summary

The Racing Australia Board approved a new definition for "intra-synovial injection" be adopted and added to **AR2** in accordance with the VAAG recommendation as detailed below in red, and **AR87** be amended in accordance with the VAAG recommendation as detailed below in red.

AR 2 Dictionary

Intra-synovial injection (and variations of that term) means the insertion of a hypodermic needle into a joint, tendon sheath or other synovial cavity of a horse.

AR 87 Horses that have had an **intra-synovial** injection

- 1) If a horse has been subjected to an **intra-synovial** injection:
 - a. the horse is ineligible for; and
 - b. a trainer must not enter or start the horse in, any race, official trial, or jump-out for 8 clear days following midnight on the day of the administration.
- 2) If a horse has been subjected to, or the Stewards reasonably suspect a horse has been subjected to, an **intra-synovial** injection at any time during the 8 clear days prior to the day of a race, official trial, or jump-out, the Stewards may order the scratching of the horse from the relevant event.
- 3) If 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 party to the administration of, an **intra-synovial** injection to the horse at any time within 8 clear days of the race, official trial, or jump-out.

*Note: By way of example, if a horse was subjected to an **intra-synovial** injection at any time on a Monday (1st day of the month), the horse would be ineligible to race, trial or jump-out until the Wednesday of the following week (10th day of the month).*

- 4) A person must not perform an **intra-synovial** injection on a horse unless he or she is a qualified veterinary surgeon.
- 5) For the purposes of this rule, it is not necessary to establish whether any substance was injected, or the nature of any substance injected.

Date of effect: 1 June 2026