



Hydrocortisone threshold to be introduced into the Greyhounds Australasia Rules

Warning to trainers – Hydrocortisone usage in greyhounds

On 1 July 2015, Greyhounds Australasia will introduce a urinary threshold for hydrocortisone of 1000 ng/mL within GAR 83 (8) as follows:

“Hydrocortisone (cortisol) as evidenced by the presence of hydrocortisone at or below a mass concentration of 1000 nanograms per millilitre in a sample of urine taken from a greyhound will not breach the provisions of sub rule (1A) or (2) of this rule.”

This threshold has been determined following a population survey that measured urinary hydrocortisone levels in 894 greyhounds sampled on race day. The possibility of exceeding this threshold naturally is extremely remote.

Trainers are advised to be extremely cautious using products that contain hydrocortisone close to racing as this may inadvertently lead to a rise in urinary hydrocortisone levels.

Hydrocortisone (cortisol) is a glucocorticoid (corticosteroid) produced naturally by the adrenal gland. Its main functions involve the regulation of carbohydrate, protein and fat metabolism but glucocorticoids have effects on virtually every cell type and system in mammals. The anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving properties could inhibit sensation of muscle or joint pain and increase the fatigue threshold.

The urinary threshold does not apply to hydrocortisone hemisuccinate (arising from the use of hydrocortisone sodium succinate) or the Permanently Banned Prohibited Substances listed in GAR 79A (iv) – *“Corticotropins, including adrenocorticotropic hormone (ACTH) and tetracosactrin (tetracosactide).”*

Trainers are advised that products containing hydrocortisone should only be used under the guidance of a veterinary surgeon, and like other Schedule 4 substances, it must only be prescribed to an animal under their care having established a therapeutic need for that substance.

Therapeutic use of hydrocortisone may result in a level of hydrocortisone in a subsequent sample that exceeds this threshold. Trainers are therefore advised to avoid the use of these substances close to racing.

For further information please contact your state controlling body.