



N a t i o n a l E q u i n e D e n t a l P r a c t i t i o n e r s I n c .

STATEMENT ON THE USE OF POWER TOOLS

issued by the

National Equine Dental Practitioners Inc.

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According to member reports and advice from the public there have been a significant number of instances where Australian veterinarians and US-trained equine dental technicians have engaged in machine assisted filing of horses' teeth which has resulted in:

- Excessive removal of occlusal tooth material resulting in the inability of horses to masticate appropriately. This is due to the smoothing (floating) of the grinding surfaces of the (pre)molars. Spilling wads of feed, colic, choke, excessive salivation and weight loss are some of the symptoms.
- Extensive bleeding from gingival mucosal tissue injury subsequent to the use of power tools.
- Sudden violent response by a sedated horse during the use of motorised tools resulting in fatal trauma.
- Horses being worse to ride due to being reactive to pain experienced from bit contact after excessive reduction of the first lower cheek teeth when operators have been misguided and made 'bit seats'.
- Aggressive reduction of the length of canine teeth to the degree of exposing sensitive secondary dentine tissue.
- The likelihood of overheating structures contained within the teeth due to the absence of water-cooling. These structures are the living cells that deposit new dentine and cells contained in the pulp canal. This in turn risks pulp necrosis, decay and ultimately tooth weakness and tooth loss.

Postal address: PO Box 372 Somerville VIC 3913 Phone 0415 352 875



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Procedures

The NEDP supports the statement by Mr Peter Borgdorff to the Department of Primary Industries Victoria, which recommends:

(start quote)

- a. Filing of the molars must not smoothen or level the arcades so as to cause improper mastication of long fibres or grain. (whole grain and long fibres in droppings)
- b. Filing of the incisors (to achieve better molar occlusion) is not permitted unless
 1. incisor tooth length in one arcade is uneven or
 2. extended due to 'parrot mouth' or 'sow mouth'.
- c. Feed impaction, gum disease, abnormal dental wear and dental related oral conditions are to be reported to the owner. The service provider must also explain the implications for the horse's well-being.
- d. Treatment must not exceed an acceptable level of pain.
- e. That no rotary power equipment be used unless continuously water cooled.
- f. That no power equipment be used which risks lacerating soft oral tissue.
- g. That no teeth be cut by cutting forceps as this risks fractures.
- h. Under the Law the only persons allowed to prescribe sedatives, tranquillisers, anaesthetics and analgesics are registered veterinary surgeons.
- i. That no extensive treatment, other than routine treatment such as filing and wolf tooth removal, be rendered unless the owner is fully informed of the extent of proposed treatment, its benefits and its associated risks.
- j. That equipment is presented in a sanitised condition prior to treatment.

(end quote)

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Practice Standards

The National Equine Dental Practitioners, an association which accepts qualifying members who are equine dentists, equine vets and other equine dental practitioners has begun a process that will see stronger scrutiny of equine dentistry practices.

Author: Peter Borgdorff- President NEDP.

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