

Strangles Research

Injectable vaccines have been available for the prevention of strangles for many years. While these vaccines have reduced the severity of the disease they have, on occasions, been associated with abscess formation at the injection site and some outbreaks of the disease have been known to occur in vaccinated herds.

This year we saw introduced to New Zealand for the first time a vaccine (PINNACLE) which is not injected but is administered up the horses' nose. The idea behind this is that if you can stop the causative bacteria *Streptococcus equi*, getting through the lining of the nasal cavity (nasal mucosa) there is a better chance of preventing the horse getting the disease.

Exciting things are presently happening in the world of strangles research which are likely to lead to the production of even more effective vaccines in the future. In 1999 a research team funded by the Home of Rest for Horses in England decoded all the genes in *Streptococcus equi*. This information is available on the internet and so researchers worldwide can for the first time, study which genes *Streptococcus equi* needs to cause the disease. From these studies they can assess the importance of each gene and, in a few years time should be able to produce an even more efficient vaccine.