BULLETIN TO ALL VETERINARIANS

1 July 2011

Hendra virus confirmed in NSW horse

On Friday 1 July 2011, samples from a horse were tested at the State Virology Laboratory at Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute, Camden and found to be positive for Hendra virus by PCR testing of blood samples.

Samples from this horse have been forwarded to Australian Animal Health Laboratory in Geelong for validation.

The horse was from a property near Wollongbar on the NSW North Coast.

This incident is not linked to the case earlier this week at Beaudesert in Queensland.

The horse was reported as being off colour and feverish on Tuesday 28 June 2100. On Tuesday evening the horse was examined by a private veterinary practitioner who noted it had a high fever (40.8), significantly elevated heart and respiration rates, brick red mucous membranes and was only passing scant faeces. The horse also had neurological signs including; slight ataxia, a wide frontal stance and a lip droop. The horse was treated for endotoxaemia and initially appeared to be responding to treatment. The horse was revisited by the private practitioner several times on Wednesday 29 June and was euthansed very early in the morning of Thursday 30 June after developing severe neurological signs including apparent blindness.

The local Livestock Health and Pest Authority and Department of Primary Industries were advised that the horse was suspected to be infected with Hendra virus early on 30 June 2011.

The property has been quarantined and staff from the Department of Primary Industries and the Livestock Health and Pest Authority are working with property owners in conjunction with other government agencies.

Restrictions are in place on the quarantined property and apply to the movement of horses and other items onto and off the property.

There are no neighbouring properties with horses and the only other horse on the property appears well.

Veterinarians are urged to review their Hendra virus case investigation procedures, infection control protocols and client communication resources.

Reminder on Hendra sampling protocols

Veterinarians are reminded that the following samples should be submitted from a horse suspected to be infected with Hendra:

- 10 mL of clotted **and** LiHep blood in evacuated tubes for virology

- Swabs from each nasal cavity pooled in PBGS or 2ml of saline if no transport media available.

PPE

Veterinarians are reminded of the importance of appropriate PPE when examining and treating horses. The most recent version of the Guidelines for Veterinarians handling potential Hendra virus infection in horses (Version 4.1)is available at the website www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au . This information was written for Queensland vets but the principles are applicable wherever there is a risk of Hendra virus infection.

Notification of suspect Hendra

Report all suspected cases in horses to the local Livestock Health and Pest Authority, an inspector with the Department of Primary Industries, or the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.

Further information

Further information on Hendra including advice on sampling and information for clients may be found at:

- http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/horses/health/general/hendra-virus/vets
- http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/animal/info-vets and
- http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/horses/health/general/hendra-virus

Contact details for NSW Public Health Units are available at:
http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/publichealth/Infectious/phus.asp

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