

28 July 2011

Fifth Hendra case confirmed at Mullumbimby

A fifth horse has died from Hendra virus on the NSW North Coast, this time at a property near Mullumbimby, NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) confirmed today.

“The property has been quarantined and movement restrictions are in place for all horses and companion animals, including cats and dogs,” NSW Chief Veterinary Officer Ian Roth said.

“There are eight other horses on the quarantined property of which four are considered at risk. A horse in a separate paddock is showing signs of illness but has been initially tested negative for Hendra. The others are currently showing no signs of illness.

“There are three cats and two dogs on the property – all will be assessed in line with NSW DPI’s policy for companion animals.”

Mr Roth said the horse was not noticeably ill on Saturday but found dead in the paddock on Sunday morning.

“A veterinarian took a swab from the dead horse and sent the sample to NSW DPI’s Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute for laboratory analysis – results confirmed the Hendra virus last night.”

Mr Roth said the Mullumbimby area property was the fourth in NSW affected by Hendra virus after properties at Wollongbar, Macksville and Lismore were quarantined earlier in the month.

“It is likely that flying foxes in fig trees were again the source of infection,” Mr Roth said.

“Hendra virus can spread from flying foxes to horses and, rarely, from horses to people, and just once in Queensland from horses to a dog.”

Hendra in NSW snapshot (since 30/6/2011):

- 4 properties have been confirmed positive for the Hendra virus
- 87 properties have been confirmed as negative for the Hendra virus, with further confirmatory antibody testing still underway on some properties
- Awaiting results for 2 samples.

More information on the Hendra virus is available at:

www.agriculture.nsw.gov.au/info/hendra

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