

Biosecurity Queensland alert

Hendra virus – industry communiqué

11 July 2012

Two properties removed from quarantine

Biosecurity Queensland has released properties in Rockhampton and Ingham from quarantine after test results returned negative for Hendra virus.

Three properties remain under quarantine for Hendra virus in Mackay after a positive test result was received from a horse on 27 June 2012.

Rockhampton case

A property located in Rockhampton was released from quarantine on 11 July 2012. The quarantine was imposed after a horse died of Hendra virus on Saturday 26 May 2012.

Biosecurity Queensland has completed comprehensive sampling and assessments on all animals on this property. The animals were assessed daily throughout the quarantine period of 37 days and have shown no clinical signs of the virus.

Two horses on the property which initially tested positive to the presence of Hendra virus genetic material have been released from quarantine after all subsequent tests were negative.

All aspects of these cases were reviewed by an expert panel made up of an immunologist, senior veterinarians, and animal pathologists from across Australia. The experts agreed that the animals were not infected and did not pose any risk.

As the virus was only found on samples taken from the nasal area of each horse, the expert panel concluded that there were a number of plausible explanations for the initial positive results such as a local Hendra virus replication in the horses' nose only.

Ingham case

A property located in Ingham was released from quarantine on 10 July 2012. The quarantine was imposed after a horse died of Hendra virus on Monday 28 May 2012.

Biosecurity Queensland has completed comprehensive sampling and assessments on all animals on this property. The animals were assessed daily throughout the quarantine period of 34 days and have shown no clinical signs of the virus.

One dog on the Ingham property which initially tested positive to the presence of Hendra virus genetic material has been released from quarantine after all subsequent tests were negative.

All aspects of these cases were reviewed by an expert panel made up of an immunologist, senior veterinarians, and animal pathologists from across Australia. The experts agreed that the animals were not infected and did not pose any risk.

The virus was found on one sample – a rectal swab. The expert panel concluded that there are a number of plausible explanations for the initial positive results such as the virus being present in the intestine (having been eaten and passed through) or viral material was present on the skin on the dog (e.g. horse faeces or other matter).

Personal protective equipment rebate

The Queensland Government has implemented a personal protective equipment (PPE) rebate program for veterinarians, available from 1 July 2012.

The rebate program has been designed to assist and encourage veterinarians to use PPE for themselves and any other person who may be assisting with the sampling, treatment or examination of horses suspected of being infected with Hendra virus.

Dr. Rick Symons
Chief Veterinary Officer
Biosecurity Queensland

All veterinarians have a responsibility to ensure that appropriate PPE is worn by themselves and anyone who is assisting them with the sampling, treatment or examination of horses suspected of being infected with Hendra virus.

For information on the program, visit the [Biosecurity Queensland website](#).

More information

The [Hendra virus information pack for horse owners](#) outlines how to reduce the risk of horses becoming infected with Hendra virus and is available on the [Biosecurity Queensland website](#).

Notify suspected Hendra virus cases by contacting Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 (business hours) or the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888 (24 hour hotline).

Contact your GP, local Queensland Health Emergency Department or local Public Health Unit if you have concerns about possible exposure of people to a horse with Hendra virus infection.

For general enquiries about the infection of Hendra virus in humans, call the Queensland Health Hotline on 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84) or visit www.health.qld.gov.au

For information about managing Hendra virus risks at workplaces, contact Workplace Health and Safety Queensland on 1300 369 915 or visit www.worksafe.qld.gov.au

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