

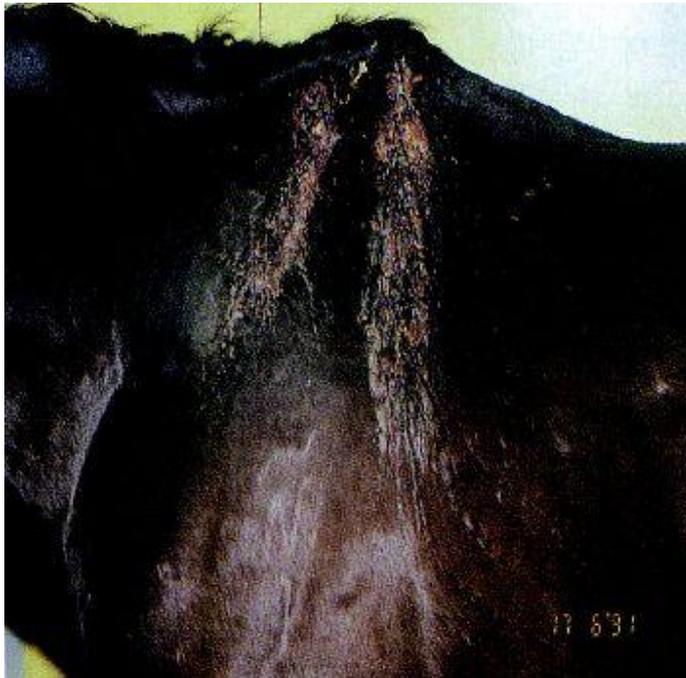
# Brucellosis

This disease was eradicated from Australia in 1992.

Bovine brucellosis is a chronic infectious disease of cattle that causes abortions, the birth of weak or dead calves, infertility and, as a consequence, reduced milk production. All ages of cattle are susceptible and infection can last for many years.

Infection with *B. abortus* has been recorded in most species of domestic livestock, as well as in dogs, cats and humans. However, these species have not been found to be significant in spreading the disease to cattle. Horses can become infected with *B. abortus*, but in this case the bacteria have a preference for bursae, tendons, muscles and joints and are commonly found in cases of fistulous withers and poll evil.

Fistulous withers and poll evil are rare, inflammatory conditions of horses that differ essentially only in their location. In fistulous withers the sinus is located on the withers and the symptoms are severe inflammation, swelling and pain on manipulation. As the disease progresses one or more openings discharge pus with necrosis affecting the deep seated tissues and spine.



Fistulous Withers

In Poll Evil the sinus is located at or around the poll of the horse, namely the first bone of the neck, at the top of the head – it stands out prominently and can be clearly seen or felt.

Again the symptoms are a painful and sometimes extensive inflammatory swelling on one or both sides of the middle line and as the disease progresses these swellings will burst out, creating one or more sinus from which a discharge of pus runs continuously. A horse with poll evil will stand with its head erect and nose poked forward, to avoid the pain involved in lowering its head.



Poll Evil

The condition may be traumatic or infectious in origin. *Brucella abortus* and occasionally *B suis* can be isolated from the fluid removed from the unopened bursa, and outbreaks of brucellosis in cattle have followed contact with horses with open bursitis. A *Brucella* titer should always be evaluated in these cases; if significant, the owners should be made aware of the public health significance.