



19 March 2014

New Hendra virus case confirmed in Bundaberg

Biosecurity Queensland is managing a new Hendra virus case in the Bundaberg area after positive test results were received late last night.

Queensland's Chief Veterinary Officer Dr Rick Symons said a private veterinarian had euthanased one horse on the property on Monday after it became unwell over the weekend with test results last night confirming the animal had Hendra virus.

"There is one other horse on the property. Tracing and risk assessments are being undertaken on any animals that may have had contact with the infected horse to work out if further testing needs to be done," Dr Symons said.

"The property has been quarantined which means restrictions apply to moving horses and horse materials on and off the property. The quarantine will be in place for at least one month."

Queensland Health's Public Health experts are assessing the situation today to determine if any humans had contact with the infected horse, and stands ready to provide any assistance, counselling, information, testing or treatment that may be required.

Dr Symons said this case was the first Hendra virus incident in Queensland this year.

"The timing of this case highlights the need for horse owners to remain vigilant in taking steps to reduce the risk of infection as Hendra virus can occur year round.

"Vaccination is the single most effective way of reducing the risk of Hendra virus infection in horses. It is recommended that horse owners speak to their veterinarian about vaccinating their horses.

"If a horse becomes sick, owners should contact their veterinarian immediately. People in contact with horses need to remember to continue to practice good biosecurity and personal hygiene measures even if a horse is vaccinated against Hendra virus.

"Horse owners and vets are encouraged to download the latest information on Hendra virus from our website www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au or by calling 13 25 23."

Movement restrictions

Restrictions only apply to moving horses and horse materials on and off the infected property, and the property will be quarantined for at least one month.

Horse owners need to remain vigilant in taking steps to reduce the risk of infection as Hendra virus can occur year round but is more common during the cooler months. If a horse becomes sick, owners should contact their veterinarian immediately as happened in this case.

It is therefore important for horse owners to take steps to protect themselves and their animals year round.

Reducing the risk of Hendra virus

There are a number of measures horse owners can take to reduce the risk of you and your horses from becoming infected with Hendra virus.

- A Hendra virus vaccine is available for horses. It is recommended horse owners discuss with their veterinarian whether vaccinating their horses is appropriate.
- Horse feed and water containers should be removed from under trees. If possible, place feed and water containers under a shelter.
- Owners should inspect and identify flowering/fruited trees on their property. Horses should be removed from paddocks where flowering/fruited trees are attracting flying foxes. Horses should be returned only after the trees have stopped flowering/fruited and the flying foxes have gone. If horses cannot be removed from the paddock, consider fencing (temporary or permanent) to restrict access to flowering/ fruited trees. Clean up any fruit debris underneath the trees before returning horses.
- If it is not possible to remove horses from paddocks, try to temporarily remove your horses during times of peak flying fox activity (usually at dusk and during the night).
- Ensure that sick horses are isolated from other horses, people and animals until a veterinarian's opinion is obtained.
- If there is more than one horse on your property, handle unaffected horses first and then only handle sick horses after taking appropriate precautions.
- Make sure gear exposed to any body fluids from horses is cleaned and disinfected before it is used on another horse. This includes halters, lead ropes and twitches. Talk to your veterinarian about which cleaning agents and disinfectants to use.
- When cleaning contaminated equipment from a sick horse, wear gloves, cover any cuts or grazes and wash your hands thoroughly afterwards.
- It is essential that horse owners practise good biosecurity and not travel with, work on or take sick horses to other properties or equestrian events.
- Do not allow visiting horse practitioners (e.g. farriers) to work on sick horses.
- Seek veterinary advice before bringing any sick horse onto your property.

The [Hendra Virus Information For Horse Owners](#) pack provides information and precautions on reducing the risk of Hendra virus to you and your animals.

More information

A Hendra virus vaccine for horses is now available and it is recommended that horse owners discuss with their veterinarian whether vaccinating their horses is appropriate.

Notify suspected Hendra virus cases by contacting Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 (during business hours) or the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888 (24-hour hotline). More information is available at www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au

Contact your GP, local Queensland Health Accident and Emergency Department or local Public Health Unit if you have concerns about possible exposure of people to a horse with Hendra virus infection. General enquiries about Hendra virus infection in humans may be directed to the Queensland Health Hotline on 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84).

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

