

17 August 2011

Sixth Hendra case confirmed at Ballina

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

“The property has been quarantined and the infected horse has been euthanised and buried on the property,” NSW Chief Veterinary Officer Dr Ian Roth said.

“There are two other at risk horses on the quarantined property, both of which are currently showing no signs of illness.

“These horses will be closely monitored and following an initial test, further laboratory testing will be carried out 16 and 32 days following the last contact with the infected horse.”

Dr Roth said the horse was noticeably ill late on Sunday and deteriorated rapidly during the night and into Monday.

“A private veterinarian took blood and swabs from the sick horse and sent the sample to NSW DPI’s Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute for laboratory analysis – results confirmed the Hendra virus last night,” he said.

Dr Roth said the Ballina area property was the fifth in NSW affected by Hendra virus after properties at Wollongbar, Macksville, Lismore and Mullumbimby were quarantined last month.

“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):

- 5 properties have been confirmed positive for the Hendra virus
- 150 properties have been confirmed as negative for the Hendra virus, with further confirmatory antibody testing still underway on some properties
- Awaiting results for 5 samples.

More information on the Hendra virus is available at:

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

Media contact:

NSW DPI Media Unit: 02 6391 3686 or 0427 192 658

NSW HEALTH Media Unit: 02 9391 9121 (After Hours: 02 9962 9890)