

Hendra virus – information for industry

6 July 2013

Hendra virus case at the Gold Coast

Biosecurity Queensland is managing a Hendra virus incident at the Gold Coast after positive test results were received on the evening of 5 July 2013.

A fifteen year old, unvaccinated pleasure horse was noticed to be dull and depressed with an increased respiratory rate early on Thursday 4 July 2013.

A private veterinarian visited that evening. The horse was in sternal recumbancy, convulsing intermittently, dull, lethargic and non-responsive. Samples were taken for Hendra virus testing.

By the next afternoon, Friday 5 July, the horse had deteriorated and was sedated and euthanased.

The horse returned positive PCR results on all sample types submitted (nasal, oral and rectal swabs and blood).

There are no other horses on the property. Biosecurity Queensland has quarantined the property to address the risk of environmental contamination. Tracing and risk assessments are being undertaken on any animals that have been on or off the property, as well as any neighbouring animals that may have had contact with the infected horse.

While under quarantine, restrictions will apply to moving horses and horse materials on and off the infected property.

Hendra virus vaccine

Vaccination is the single most effective way of reducing the risk of Hendra virus infection in horses.

Biosecurity Queensland advises horse owners to talk to their veterinarian about the option of vaccinating their horses

More information

This second Hendra virus incident within two weeks highlights that most Hendra virus incidents occur in June to August, although they can occur at any time of the year.

Veterinarians, owners and event managers should remain vigilant and be prepared. More information about Hendra virus can be found at www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au

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 Hendra virus infection 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

Follow Biosecurity Queensland on Facebook and Twitter (@BiosecurityQld).

Dr. Rick Symons
Chief Veterinary Officer
Biosecurity Queensland