

Biosecurity alert

Hendra virus – information for veterinarians

20 May 2010

Hendra virus confirmed

Biosecurity Queensland is responding to the confirmed report of a Hendra virus case in a horse on the Sunshine Coast.

The Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL) has confirmed a positive PCR test result to Hendra virus in an EDTA blood sample taken from the horse by a private veterinarian.

The horse was examined by the veterinarian after the owner reported it was displaying acute onset of neurological signs. The horse was reported as being uncoordinated, demonstrating mouth twitching and being off its food.

Upon veterinary investigation, the horse exhibited normal respiratory and heart rates and had a packed cell volume PCV of 46. The horse was found to be blind. The neurological signs progressed to seizures, the horse was humanely euthanased and buried on the property.

One horse remains on the property and has been subject to sampling by a Biosecurity Queensland veterinary officer this afternoon. The horse is reported as clinically normal.

The property is in quarantine and no horse movements are recorded recently.

A community engagement program has been commenced to advise neighbours of the situation and to provide relevant information.

The most recent version of the Guidelines for Veterinarians handling potential Hendra virus infection in horses (Version 4) is available at the website www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au.

Veterinarians are urged to review their Hendra virus case investigation procedures and infection control protocols.