Hendra virus confirmed near Tweed Heads

The NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is urging horse owners to remain vigilant, following confirmation of Hendra virus infection in an unvaccinated horse near Tweed Heads.

NSW Chief Veterinary Officer, Dr Sarah Britton, said the property near Tweed Heads has been placed under movement restrictions by Local Land Services.

“This is the first confirmed case of Hendra virus in NSW this year,” Dr Britton said.

“Samples from the horse were sent by a private veterinarian for laboratory analysis to Queensland’s Biosecurity Sciences Laboratory at Coopers Plains and initial test results confirmed Hendra virus.

“The 4 year old Arab cross was initially noticed by the owner to be lethargic and not eating properly. It deteriorated the next day and was euthanased by a private veterinarian.”

Dr Britton said vaccination of horses is the most effective way to help manage Hendra virus disease.

“Vaccination of horses provides a public health and work health and safety benefit by reducing the risk of Hendra transmission to humans and other susceptible animals.

“Whenever Hendra infection is suspected, even in vaccinated horses, appropriate biosecurity precautions, including personal protective equipment (PPE), should be used.

“Horse owners are encouraged to discuss the option of Hendra vaccination of their horse with their veterinarian.

“Horses should also be kept away from flowering and fruiting trees that are attractive to bats.

“Do not place feed and water under trees and cover feed and water containers with a shelter so they cannot be contaminated from above.”

If your horse in unwell, keep people and animals away from the horse and call your private veterinarian immediately.

If your vet is unavailable you can call a District Veterinarian with the Local Land Services or the Animal Biosecurity Emergency Hotline on 1800 675 888.

For more information about Hendra, visit [NSWDPI website](http://www.nswdpi.gov.au).

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