New South Wales

ANIMAL HEALTH SURVEILLANCE

July-September 1997

Number 97/3

STAFF

Libby Salmon has accepted the position of Veterinary Officer, Bourke. Libby has 12 years experience in practice in Darwin and Dubbo, and is highly experienced with post-graduate qualifications in sheep reproduction. We look forward to Libby's skills and personality contributing to the animal health services in the Western Division and to the community of Bourke.

John Sullivan has been appointed District Veterinarian with the Braidwood Rural Lands Protection Board. John is a final year veterinary student at the University of Queensland, and will commence duties at the end of the year. Meanwhile, in a surprise development, Mr Shane Sullivan resigned from Gundagai after only several weeks. Fortunately, Ms Luzia Rast, a local practitioner, was on the eligibility list and still keen to take on the position, and has already started working part-time with the Board. We look forward to the enthusiasm and new talent that Luzia and John can provide.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTORAL CONDITIONS

Continuing dry cold winter conditions resulted in an increase in the area of the State under drought declaration to 73% for September, up from 43% for July.

However excellent rainfall in the first week of September and subsequent follow up rains have improved conditions in many areas and there was a significant reduction in the area of the State drought declared, back to 43% for October.

Unfortunately areas of the central Darling region and north west plains missed out on significant rains.

The winter cereal crop prospects have improved dramatically over most areas and average to above average yields are expected in most areas except for the north west plains, although the rain did arrive too late to save some crops in the more marginal areas.

The pasture situation is not as promising, as the dry autumn and winter has limited growth and, although the situation has improved there is not likely to result in any large bulk of the feed over the late spring and summer unless follow up rains continue.

Exceptional Circumstances - A submission on behalf of Wentworth RLPB has been submitted to the Commonwealth government. Further information to support the submission has been collected from a telephone survey of all ratepayers in the RLPB area.

The Rural Adjustment Scheme Advisory Council, (RASAC) visited the Monaro area (Cooma and Bombala RLPBs) to inspect the area and collect further information to assist in the consideration of the application for EC assistance.
Contact: John Bowler, Orange on (02) 6391 3680.

NEW VIRUS ISOLATED FROM PIGS

Paramyxoviridae infection in pigs

An apparently new virus in the family Paramyxoviridae has been isolated from a large piggery in New South Wales. The virus was isolated during investigation of an outbreak of reproductive failure in the piggery, characterised by an increased number of stillborn and mummified piglets, and a decreased farrowing rate.

History and clinical signs

Over a four month period, commencing in mid April 1997, the affected piggery experienced a dramatic reduction in farrowing rate, associated with birth of mummified piglets and stillborn piglets with deformities. The disease spread sequentially from one unit to other units in the piggery, affecting up to one third of litters. Sows and gilts of all parities have been affected. Affected litters may contain live, stillborn and mummified piglets. No other clinical disease has been detected in pigs of any age.

Gross pathology and histopathology

Affected stillborn piglets frequently have arthrogryposis and some have cranio-facial abnormalities such as undershot jaws. There is often marked degeneration of the brain and spinal cord, which may be almost absent in some piglets.

Histological examination of the brain and spinal cord reveals evidence of a non-suppurative encephalitis and degeneration, with intranuclear and possibly intracytoplasmic inclusion bodies. Non-suppurative myocarditis and hepatitis may also be present.

Virology and serology

Early investigations excluded a wide range of endemic and exotic agents as the cause of the syndrome. Agents specifically excluded include: classical swine fever, porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS), Aujesky's disease, encephalomyocarditis virus, porcine parvovirus, leptospirosis, Akabane virus and bat paramyxovirus (EMV).

A virus isolated from affected piglets at the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute (EMAI), Camden, has been shown to be a member of the family Paramyxoviridae. Studies are under way at the Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL), Geelong, to characterise this virus and to attempt to reproduce the disease. Testing to date has been unable to identify the virus as any known member of the Paramyxoviridae family.

A virus neutralisation test (VNT) has been developed at both EMAI and AAHL, and is being used to test serum samples from pigs, as well as other species, for evidence of exposure to the virus.

Investigations to date

Testing at the affected piggery, including archival sera, has shown no evidence of the virus up to April 1997. Virtually all pigs tested since May 1997 have had high levels of neutralising antibodies to this virus, and it appears that the virus was introduced to a naive population, probably in about early March, 1997, and spread rapidly throughout the piggery.

Testing at a number of contact premises has found evidence of active infection only at two contract grower piggeries that would have received young pigs from the parent piggery while the virus was actively spreading. Extensive testing of pigs from other piggeries elsewhere in NSW and in other States, and of archival sera from the PRRS survey and a more recent survey for toxoplasmosis conducted in early 1997 has found no evidence of infection with this virus in any other piggeries.

Extensive testing of a wide range of species in contact with the piggery has been undertaken, including cats, sheep, cattle, rodents, birds and fruit bats. Twenty three of 56 archival sera from fruit bats, provided by QDPI Yeerongpilly, were positive for the virus, with titres ranging from 16 to 256. Samples from all other species tested were negative. A large colony of fruit bats roosts in close proximity to the piggery from about October to April each year, and provides a potential source of infection. Investigations on the local bat colony will commence when it returns, to further investigate this as a possible source.

Sera from two humans, one at the affected piggery and one at one of the grower piggeries were positive to the virus, with titres of 128 and 512. Both these workers had experienced an unexplained febrile incident following potential exposure to virus circulating within the piggeries. Testing of other piggery and abattoir workers, and others potentially exposed to the virus has identified no other sero-positive humans.

Summary

This virus appears to be a previously unrecognised member of the family Paramyxoviridae. It is highly infectious for pigs, but appears to be non-pathogenic for all ages of pigs other than the foetus. Investigations are continuing to identify the natural host for this virus, although preliminary evidence

suggests that it may be another virus of fruit bats. There is also some evidence, although not conclusive, that the virus may be zoonotic, possibly causing a severe febrile illness in humans.

Spread of the virus appears to have been limited to the affected piggery and the two contract grower facilities, with no evidence of spread to any other piggeries. There is also good evidence that the virus is not already widespread in the Australian pig population.

A more detailed report by the key investigators has been submitted for publication in the Journal of Emerging Infectious Diseases on the Internet at http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/EID/eid.htm.
Contact: Evan Sergeant, Orange on (02) 6391 3687.

DISEASE TRENDS AND PREDICTIONS

Super Worms
A strain of Barbers Poll Worm (*Haemonchus*) resistant to both closantel (Seponver, Razar etc) and the macrocyclic lactone (ML) drench group (ivermectin, Cydectin® etc) has surfaced in northern NSW. This has serious worm control implications, at least control which relies heavily on drenches.

ML resistant strains have been uncovered in NSW: two *Ostertagia* strains in goats, and three *Haemonchus* (all in sheep).

This new strain of *Haemonchus* reminds us that the burgeoning anthelmintic resistance problem does not augur well for worm control based solely on chemicals. A "multi-strand" or integrated approach needs to become the norm; an approach combining all of the following is needed:-

- the strategic but reduced use of drenches
- breeding resistant animals (NEMESIS program)
- grazing management - creating "low-worm" pastures for susceptible sheep.
- flock and weaner management - "tight" joining and lambing, and weaning by 12-14 weeks after lambing starts.
- good nutrition - young sheep growing well developed better immunity.
- good information
  - regular monitoring of parasite levels (WORMTESTS)
  - regular testing for drench resistance (DRENCHTEST/DRENCHRITE), ideally every two years.
  - expert advice

Contact: Steve Love, Armidale on (02) 6773 7249.

Egg Drop Syndrome '76 in NSW
Twenty one flocks have now been diagnosed with Egg Drop Syndrome '76 **(**EDS) in NSW. Nine in the Sydney area, 11 in Tamworth and one in Bathurst.

The disease outbreaks in NSW, predominantly in commercial layers, spanned from November 1995 to May 1997 with the peak incidence between April 1996 and February 1997. No new cases have been recorded since May, 1997

Commercial duck flocks in the Sydney area have shown serological and limited clinical evidence of EDS as early as October 95.

The limited geographical spread of the current EDS outbreak, the time span of the outbreak, and other epidemiological factors, tend to support the role of aquatic birds and lateral spread between farms in this disease outbreak rather, than a vertical transmission or other common source such as contaminated vaccines.
Contact: George Arzey, Menangle on (02) 4640 6402.

QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

Citrullinaemia
During the quarter information was received to confirm that a bull in an artificial breeding centre was a carrier of the gene that causes citrullinaemia. This is a hereditary disease of cattle, resulting in affected calves dying within a few days of birth. The carrier bull entered the centre before the introduction of the requirement for testing of all bulls entering AI centres for this gene prior to entry. The centre has now tested all bulls, and advised clients of the bulls status.

Acorn calves
Several reports of "Acorn calves" have been received during the quarter, with affected calves having typical shortened limb bones and enlarged joints. Widespread outbreaks of acorn calves have occurred periodically in the past, for no apparent reason. Despite intensive investigations a cause for this condition has still not been determined.

Tick fever
A single case of tick fever, caused by *Babesia bigemina*, was diagnosed in a dairy herd at Kyogle. The property adjoins a holding previously known to be infected, and a low number of ticks were found on inspection. A dipping program has commenced to eradicate the infestation and blood sampling is being carried out to identify any other carrier animals.

DISEASE CONTROL AND ADVISORY PROGRAMS

Bovine Johne's Disease Market Assurance Program
As at 30 September 1997, there are 337 herds enrolled in the Cattle MAP in NSW, comprising 40,285 cattle. There have been 127 reactors in 96 herds (0.3% of cattle), with only 1 infected herd identified to date. Seventeen herds have now had their second test, and have progressed to TN2 status.

Of the herds enrolled, 70% are beef and 30% are primarily dairy enterprises. About 66% of herds enrolled are studs.

A total of 300 herds have achieved an assessed status under the MAP (see below), with the balance still awaiting final results.

Status	Herds
MN1	14
TN1	250
TN1- extended	19
TN2	17

A list of assessed herds is available by Infofax on 1902 940 579, and should be available from the NAHIS web site by early 1998.

Audits
Recently a random audit was conducted on NSW herds and approved veterinarians enrolled in the market assurance program. To date, audits have been completed on 35 veterinarians and a sample of their herds, with no significant problems identified. The main issues noted were:

- Vets and owners should each have a copy of results and certificates.
- There should be a written plan to minimise the possibility of introducing infection. This should list all the risk factors for the particular property (e.g. purchases, shows, floods, agistment, strays) and what to do if any of these situations arise.

Overall the results have been very pleasing and the assistance of the producers and veterinarians involved was appreciated.

Extended status
In view of the low commodity prices, the drought effect, the lack (yet) of any commonly paid differential for TN/MN cattle and with the possibility of some changes to the testing scedule and status classification of the MAP scheme the status of TN (extended) might be appropriate for some herds. Any herds that would like to hold off testing for Round 2 (if they are due shortly) should apply through their supervising veterinarian for an extension. These herds would follow all the same rules of the MAP but their next test could be delayed. ***TN1 herds close to their expiry date have to do their test or apply for TN1(x) or else they go out of the scheme.***

New Logo
Below is the new logo for use by assessed herds accepted at the recent national review of the program. It will be used in advertisements and sales catalogues to identify herds and flocks with Monitored Negative or Tested Negative (MN or TN) status. It will also be available shortly on signs which can be attached to property entrance gates, boundary fences, milking sheds and so on. The signs can also be used at shows and sales to identify stock in the various MAP programs.

Contact Tim Jessep, Goulburn on (02) 4823 0744.

New South Wales Footrot Strategic Plan
Submissions for footrot culture to RVL Orange were once again dominated by northern districts. A total of 50 submissions, of which 35 (70%) originated from Armidale, Glen Innes, Inverell and Tamworth, were received for gelatin gel testing. Results to hand for these showed 12 Benign, 20 Virulent, 5 mixed Virulent and Benign, 9 no growth and 4 other isolates.

Much of the quarter recorded cool to cold weather which was not conducive to spread conditions in the

south and together with limited rain saw little recorded activity for footrot.

As a result of the northern footrot investigations an increase in the number of footrot quarantines was noted for the quarter. A rise to 200 sheep flocks (494,077 sheep) and 6 goat flocks (837 goats) in quarantine was listed.

In such a season it was difficult to update flock prevalence figures within footrot groups but an estimated 4.4% prevalence would be in line with the long term trend.

There is a real danger that the footrot program is being swamped by the Ovine Johnes Disease campaign and is something NSW is going to have to work hard to avoid.
Contact Rob Walker, Wagga Wagga (02) 6923 0463.

Ovine Johne's Disease Surveillance
At 30 September 1997, there have been a total of 210 properties on which ovine Johne's disease has been confirmed. Of these, 175 are still classified as infected, with the remaining 35 having either depopulated or not reported a case for more than 5 years. There have been 29 new cases recorded during the quarter.
Contact: Laurie Denholm, Orange (02) 6391 3863.

Australian Sheep Johne's Disease Market Assurance Program
The MAP for sheep is now well established, with 6 training courses for veterinarians run so far, and 2 more planned in Orange in late October and late November. So far 146 veterinarians have been approved for the program.

By the end of September a total of 7 flocks had achieved MN1 status, with quite a few more undertaking testing during October
Contact Stephen Ottaway, Orange (02) 6391 3854.

Cattle tick control program
The eradication program has recommenced on properties east of the Richmond Range with the first round of treatments completed by the end of September. Cattle tick have been detected on three properties associated with an Ellangowan infestation. All had ceased treatments through winter. The finding indicates that tick activity continued through winter, a reflection of the mild climate.

The eradication program is due to commence West of the Richmond Range in early October.

Contact: Peter McGregor, Wollongbar (02) 6626 1334.

Enzootic Bovine Leucosis
The July 1997 BMT test produced the following results :

Negative BMT	1687 herds	(93.1%)
Positive BMT	108 herds	(6.0%)
Not Sampled (seasonal, off supply, etc)	16 herds	(0.9%)
TOTAL (active dairies)	1811 herds	(100%)

For the 108 herds that produced positive BMT result, an estimated EBL prevalence within the milking herd were as follows:

Less than 5%	57 herds	(52.8%)
Between 5% & 15%	44 herds	(40.7%)
More than 15%	7 herds	(6.5%)
TOTAL	108 herds	(100%)

Table 1 lists the EBL status of the State's dairy herds at the end of July 1997 :

Table 1: EBL herd status

Status	Herds	%
Accredited Free	2	(0.1%)
Certified Free	1	(0.1%)
Tested Negative	210	(11.6%)
Monitored Negative	1063	(58.7%)
BMT Negative	148	(8.2%)
Provisionally Clear	73	(4.0%)
Infected	289	(16.0%)
Not Assessed	25	(1.4%)
TOTAL	**1811**	**(100%)**

Contact Richard Zelski, Maitland (02) 4930 2419.

***Salmonella Enteriridis* Accreditation of Layer Hen Flocks in NSW**
NSW is the first state in Australia to initiate a *Salmonella enteritidis* (SE)Accreditation Scheme for commercial layers. In all other countries, *S enteritidis* surveillance has been initiated following outbreaks in humans. The NSW scheme is unique, as no *S enteritidis* cases in Australia have ever been linked to the consumption of eggs derived from the commercial sector. The scheme is aimed to detect as early as possible any incursion of *S enteritidis* into commercial layers in NSW.

Under the scheme, egg producers may elect either a monitored status or accredited status. The accredited status requires higher standards of biosecurity than the

monitored status. Sampling is based on environmental sampling of flocks at monthly intervals. The first farm in Australia was accredited in NSW as SE free in August 97 after 6 months of monthly environmental monitoring. Seventy seven other flocks are in the process of applying for enrolment in the scheme. The NSW Egg Cooperative incorporated the scheme in their HACCP plan.

Apart from safeguarding the public, the scheme offers other advantages including the ability to claim in due course that the commercial poultry industry in Australia is free of *S enteritidis*. The scheme provides a vehicle for upgrading standards on farms and facilitation of the export trade in eggs and egg products.
Contact: George Arzey, Menangle on (02) 4640 6402.

DISEASE SURVEILLANCE

Transmissable Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSE) surveillance

During the quarter, a total of 17 brains (8 cattle and 9 sheep) were examined histologically for TSE exclusion, with negative results.

Avian tuberculosis

One case of avian tuberculosis was diagnosed in an aviary bird in the Moss Vale Rural Lands Protection District.

Anthrax

No cases of anthrax were diagnosed during the current quarter, leaving the total number of anthrax cases so far in 1997 at five.

Anthrax was excluded as the cause of death in 7 other laboratory investigations during the quarter, making a total of 47 anthrax exclusions since 1 January 1997.

Bat viruses

There were 10 exclusions of bat lyssavirus during the quarter, and no cases confirmed. Most of the investigations were on bats from the north coast area, with a few from the Sydney area and other parts of the State. Most bats tested are either ill or injured bats brought in by bat carers, or bats with a history of biting or scratching people. This brings the total to 114 bats tested, of which 9 have been confirmed as infected.

Three fruit bats and 2 horses were tested for bat paramyxovirus during the quarter, all with negative results.
Contact: Evan Sergeant, Orange on (02) 6391 3687.

Bee Diseases

Table 2 shows the results of American foul brood (AFB) testing for the current quarter.

Table 2: AFB testing summary for New South Wales

	July-September, 1997
Positive	152
Negative	167
Total	319

Of the 152 positive reports, 109 were new cases, while the remaining 43 were repeat tests on previously confirmed cases.

Two reports of chalkbrood were received during the quarter.
Contact Keith Oliver, Orange on (02) 6391 3689.

Other diseases

A wide range of other diseases continue to be diagnosed, both in the field and through the submission of specimens for laboratory examination. Conditions that were commonly diagnosed, or otherwise worthy of note for the quarter include:

Cattle
Yersiniosis, salmonellosis, pestivirus and copper deficiency were diagnosed as causes of scouring and illthrift, and Neosporosis, vibriosis and pestivirus (again) as causes of reproductive failure, while Akabane virus caused congenital defects in calves.

Yersiniosis was also diagnosed as the cause of severe diarrhoea and sudden death in a herd of farmed Red deer.

Metabolic conditions such as ketosis, hypocalcaemia and hypomagnesaemia were also relatively common, associated with the calving season, and recent poor seasonal conditions.

Sheep
Focal symmetrical encephalomalacia, Polioencephalomalacia, hypocalcaemia, listeriosis and phalaris staggers caused nervous signs, while enterotoxaemia caused sudden deaths in a number of flocks.

Several cases of *Eperythrozoon ovis* infection were diagnosed, as well as post dipping abscessation in ewes and several cases of poly-synovitis in lambs.

Horses

Four cases of equine herpes virus type 1 abortion were diagnosed, on 2 separate properties during September.

Goats
Thirty of 36 milking goats in a goat dairy near Sydney began dying 1-2 days after oral drenching with an ivermectin drench. The 6 surviving goats were the only ones not to have been drenched. The only significant finding was severe acute peri-acinar necrosis in all livers examined. Ivermectin is not registered for use in goats, and is not known to cause hepatotoxicity. The cause of the deaths remains unknown.

Alpaca
Mycobacterium paratuberculosis was isolated from an alpaca from the Braidwood area, using culture and PCR to confirm the infection. The animal was originally detected as positive to a routine screening by faecal culture, and this has now been confirmed by follow-up culture at post mortem.The infected animal was clinically normal, and no lesions of Johne's disease could be detected on either gross or histopathologic examination. Investigations are continuing in the herd of origin and another associated herd.

Exotic Disease Investigations
Table 3 lists all reported exotic disease investigations during the quarter. This list only contains reported events. Numerous field and laboratory investigations are performed each year for possible exotic diseases. In most cases, exotic diseases are excluded early in the investigation and the case is not reported as such.

Animal	Disease Suspected	Diagnosis
Deer	Transmissible spongiform encephalopathy	Unsuitable specimens to exclude
Cats	Rabies	Negative
Horse	Equine morbillivirus (EMV)	Negative
Pigs	Various	Paramyxo-viridae
Rabbits	Tularaemia	Snuffles
Cat	Spongiform encephalopathy	Possible congenital metabolic condition
Horse	EMV	Negative

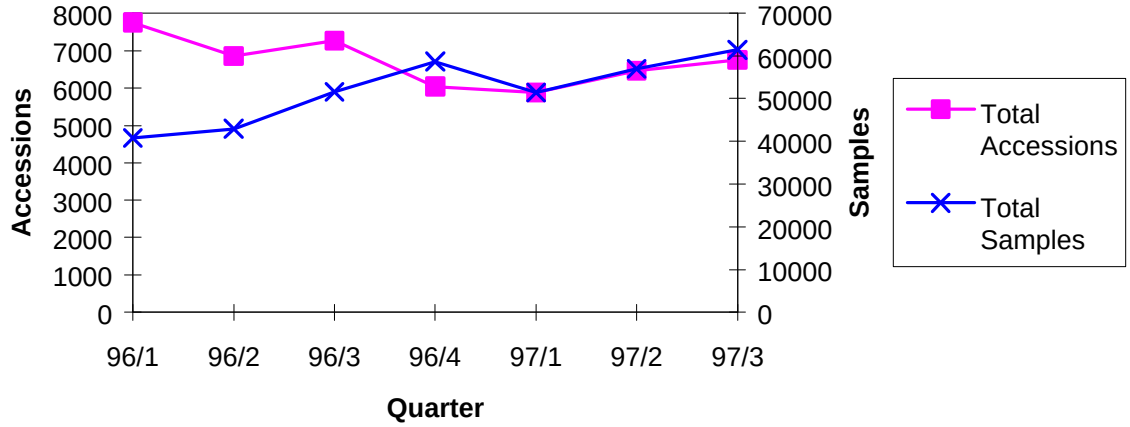
Laboratory submissions
Figure 1 and Table 4 show the throughput of samples through the laboratory system for the quarter, and since 1 January 1996. Over the period, accession numbers have dropped slightly, while total sample numbers have increased. This increase in sample numbers is at least partially associated with the increase in testing for Johne's disease carried out under the cattle MAP, and for investigation of suspect sheep flocks.
Contact: Evan Sergeant, Orange on (02) 6391 3687.

Table 3: Suspect exotic disease investigations

Table 4: Number of accessions to NSW Agriculture laboratories, by species, July - September, 1997

Laboratory	SHP	CTL	PIG	GTS	AVN	HRS	FSH	BEE	D/C	O.SP	Total
Menangle	1304	1639	142	83	117	168	5	227	130	424	4239
Orange	670	381	18	13	23	11	1	10	12	91	1230
Wollongbar	77	876	45	44	34	17	21	67	2	105	1288
Total (Jul-Sep, 1997)	2051	2896	205	140	174	196	27	304	144	620	6757
Total (Apr-Jun, 1997)	1781	2903	128	115	185	192	14	380	141	625	6464
Total (Jan-Mar, 1997)	1774	2544	78	169	191	167	30	199	136	598	5886

Figure 1: Laboratory throughput by quarter, 1996-97



ZOONOSES

The following report is extracted from the *Annual report of the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System, by* Margaret Curran, Bronwen Harvey, Scott Crerar, Graeme Oliver, Rennie D'Souza, Htoo Myint, Corrine Rann and Ross Andrews, National Centre for Disease Control, Department of Health and Family Services, for the Communicable Diseases Network Australia New Zealand, *Comm Dis Intell* 1997;21:281-307. The full the report was published in *Communicable Diseases Intelligence*, by the Australian Government Publishing Service, October 1997. Commonwealth of Australia copyright reproduced by permission. *Communicable Diseases Intelligence* is available on the world wide web at:
http://www.health.gov.au/hfs/pubs/cdi/cdihtml.htm

The zoonoses are defined as 'a group of infectious diseases transmissible under natural conditions from vertebrate animals to humans. More than 60 zoonoses have been known to occur in Australia. A number of new zoonoses, such as bat paramyxovirus (equine morbillivirus) and bat lyssavirus, have been identified over the past two years. The long-term effect of these diseases on public health is yet to be established.

The zoonoses are, in general, of low prevalence, but the level of under-diagnosis and under-reporting is not known. The zoonoses currently under national surveillance in the NNDSS are brucellosis, hydatid infection, leptospirosis, ornithosis and Q fever. Rabies, a zoonotic disease exotic to Australia, is referred to in the section on quarantinable diseases.

Brucellosis
There were 38 notifications of brucellosis in 1996. The rate of 0.2 per 100,000 population was similar to that observed in previous years. Most notifications were from Queensland (34). As in previous years, the Statistical Division with the highest rate was Central West in Queensland. The numbers were too low to detect a seasonal pattern. The male:female ratio was 4.4:1. There were 7 notifications for females, with ages ranging from 25 to 74 years. The 31 cases for males were in the age range from 15 to 74 years. Twenty-nine (76%) of the cases were in males aged between 15 and 64 years.

Hydatid infection
There were 45 reports of hydatid infection in 1996. The notification rate of 0.2 per 100,000 is similar to that observed in recent years. There were 22 cases in females and 23 in males. The youngest age group was 10 - 14 years (1 female) and the oldest age group was 75 - 79 years (two females and one male). Cases were reported from Victoria and New South Wales (14 cases each), Queensland (10), the Australian Capital Territory (4), Tasmania (2) and Western Australia (1). Cases were predominantly reported from rural Statistical Divisions. It should be noted that these cases include infections acquired in the past, and do not necessarily indicate recent exposure.

Leptospirosis
A total of 227 notifications of leptospirosis were received in 1996. The rate of 1.2 per 100,000 is

slightly higher than the 1995 rate of 1.0 per 100,000. There was a marked predominance of males, with 207 notifications in males and 20 in females, a male:female ratio of 10.4:1. The highest rate (5.1 per 100,000) was in males aged 35 - 39 years. Of the total notifications, 197 (87%) were in males aged between 15 and 64 years. The peak onset was in March (31 cases), with smaller peaks in July (22 cases) and September (26 cases).

The highest numbers of cases were recorded in Queensland (109), Victoria (75) and New South Wales (31). Queensland also had the highest rate with 3.3 notifications per 100,000 population. Tasmania with 8 cases, shared with Victoria the second highest rate of 1.7 per 100,000. The highest notification rates were reported for the Statistical Divisions of Northern in Queensland (25.2 per 100,000) and Western District and Gippsland in Victoria (23.9 and 13.7 per 100,000 respectively).

Ornithosis

Ornithosis was notifiable in all States and Territories except New South Wales. In 1996, a total of 85 notifications was received. The annual adjusted notification rate of 0.7 per 100,000 was lower than the 1995 rate of 1.5 per 100,000 and similar to the rates for the preceding few years.

The greatest number of cases (63) were recorded in Victoria, and no cases were reported from either of the Territories.

Forty-eight cases were male and 37 were female; a male:female ratio of 1.3:1. Cases occurred in all age groups up to age 79 years, but were more common in the middle to older age groups. The majority of cases (79%) were older than 40.

There was no clear seasonal pattern in onset dates, with between 1 and 12 cases reported per month. Small peaks occurred in April (11 cases) and November and December (12 cases each).

Q fever

There were 555 cases of Q fever notified in 1996. The rate of 3.0 per 100,000 was higher than the 1995 rate of 2.6 per 100,000, but lower than rates in previous years. There was no seasonal pattern.

Most notifications were from New South Wales (284) and Queensland (177) which also had the highest rates of 4.6 per 100,000 and 5.3 per 100,000 respectively. No cases were recorded from the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory or Tasmania. The highest rates were seen in the Statistical Divisions of South West and Central West in Queensland (109.5 and 80.0 per 100,000 respectively) and North Western in New South Wales (83.6 per 100,000).

Males predominated with 472 cases, compared with 83 for females. The male:female ratio was 5.7:1. Of the total notifications, 457 (82%) were in males aged between 15 and 64 years. The highest rate (8.9 notifications per 100,000) was seen in males in the 20 - 29 year age range.

Discussion

Brucellosis, Q fever and leptospirosis occur predominantly in males in age groups commonly employed in the workforce, reflecting the largely occupational nature of the exposure to these diseases. The continuing occurrence of Q fever despite the availability of a vaccine, indicates the need for better immunisation programs for those at occupational risk.

FROM THE AUSTRALIAN ANIMAL HEALTH COUNCIL

Baldock manages National Arbovirus Monitoring

Dr Chris Baldock has been appointed on a part-time basis to provide program management and coordination of services for the National Arbovirus Monitoring Program (NAMP). NAMP is concerned with defining the distribution and spread of arboviruses of animals, notably bluetongue, ephemeral fever and akabane viruses.

A workshop, involving the industry groups and other bodies involved, will be held soon to develop an operating program and a three-year business plan. At the same time, the Australian Veterinary Committee will review some of the recommendations of the NAMP review, undertaken by Dr Alick Lascelles earlier in 1997.

Dr Baldock is also Australia's National Animal Health Information System (NAHIS) coordinator. A wealth of information about Australia's animal health status is available on the NAHIS web site:

http://www.brs.gov.au/aphb/aha

TFAP becomes AAHC program from 1998

AAHC will assume management responsibility for the Tuberculosis Freedom Assurance Program (TFAP) from 1 January 1998. TFAP is the follow-up to BTEC (Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Campaign), which is expected to attain its remaining target of TB-free status later this year. The Board has appointed Dr Geoff Neumann as part-time TFAP Coordinator. He is working with the Cattle Council of Australia and representatives of Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments to prepare a draft working document which outlines the proposed management, administrative and financial arrangements.

Vet Accreditation Program to be extra core activity

The Australian Program for Accredited Veterinarians (APAV) has been adopted as a core AAHC activity, as a sub-set of the Animal Disease Preparedness program, subject to resolving cost recovery issues and approval of audit standards.

When the scheme is fully operational, Accredited Veterinarians will be registered veterinary surgeons appointed on behalf of AAHC by the respective State or Territory Chief Veterinary Officer. These non-government veterinarians will work in close partnership with government veterinarians to extend the reach and capability of Australia's veterinary services network.

AAHC's role will be to:

- maintain the national register of Accredited Veterinarians, including managing the Certificates of Accreditation;
- issue annual renewal certificates; and
- collect a management fee to cover associated costs of accreditation.

The program is being managed by Dr Geoff Neumann. The Board has approved expenditure of about $30,000 to cover a training consultant to prepare quality materials for a revised accreditation program, legal advice on contractual requirements, conducting a briefing for Chief Veterinary Officers and administrative costs in setting up the management system.

Allworth appointed Johne's Assistant Coordinator

Dr Bruce Allworth of Holbrook NSW has been appointed Assistant Coordinator of the National Johne's Program. Dr Allworth is a vet who also operates the family property, Talooby, running a beef cattle and sheep enterprise. Talooby's beef herd was one of the early entrants into the MAP for cattle.

Working closely with National Coordinator Dr David Kennedy, Dr Allworth will concentrate on operational aspects of the national Johne's program, including communications and extension, with increasing emphasis on the sheep side.

Do you want to know more about animal health in Australia?

Check out the National Animal Health Information System (NAHIS) via the the Internet at:

http://www.brs.gov.au/aphb/aha

The site maintains information on current disease statistics for Australia, as well as summary information on a wide range of animal disease, and copies of the NAHIS quarterly and annual reports, the *Animal Health Surveillance Quarterly* and the *Australian Animal Health Report.*

Getting Information on the Occurrence of Animal Diseases

This surveillance report can only convey a very limited amount of information about the occurrence and distribution of livestock diseases in New South Wales. If you would like more specific information about diseases occurring in your part of the State, contact your local Rural Lands Protection Board district veterinarian; Departmental senior field veterinary officer; or Regional Veterinary Laboratory.

For statewide information, contact NSW Agriculture's Quality Assurance Program in Orange on (02) 6391 3237 or fax (02) 6361 9976.

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