



ANIMAL HEALTH SURVEILLANCE

November–December 1995

Number 95/6

Livestock and Pastoral Conditions

At the start of the period, most of the northern half of the State was officially drought declared and facing the likelihood of a hot dry summer. However, seasonal conditions changed with summer low troughs dragging good rains from the north over much of the State. The southern parts of NSW had already enjoyed an excellent spring resulting in very favorable pastoral and stock conditions.

Disease Trends and Predictions

The good rainfall and rapid pasture growth, has been an increase in metabolic disease associated with the changeable weather conditions and low mineral availability. On the north coast, paralysis ticks, buffalo fly incursions and arboviral infections should increase. Wet conditions will also promote transmission of infectious diseases such as leptospirosis, coccidiosis and yersiniosis.

Surprisingly, *Haemonchus* was uncommon in worm counts on the southern tablelands in November. However indications in other southern and central areas in early summer were that haemonchosis is likely to be a significant parasite in sheep in the State this summer. Conditions will also be conducive to footrot breakdowns and transmission.

Investigations of Suspected Exotic Diseases

The summary of investigations undertaken of suspected exotic diseases in NSW during 1995 is appended to this report (*Contact: Ian Bell, Orange, 063 913 691*).

Equine disease surveillance

With continuing concern about equine morbillivirus, unusual mortalities in horses were investigated on several occasions. Three horses in the Hunter region died with unusual signs following agistment in the Coonamble area. Two of the horses were examined at post-mortem and specimens, sent to AAHL Geelong, were negative for EMV. The most likely cause appears to be poisoning by the whitewood tree. This tree is on the property on which the horses were agisted and has been previously suspected of causing mortality in horses. (*Contact: Stuart King, Maitland, 049 302 415*).

Significant Disease Events

Tuberculosis Breakdown at Bourke

Bovine tuberculosis has been detected on a station west of Bourke in extensive grazing country. The owners consigned a mixed load of cattle to Dubbo saleyards in December of which three groups were sold to abattoirs. Lesions of tuberculosis were

detected by meat inspectors at two abattoirs and were submitted to Regional Veterinary Laboratories at Wollongbar and Orange, where TB was confirmed.

Other cattle were sold to restockers on 4 farms. All cattle dispersed were traced and ordered to slaughter. Of the 42 cattle slaughtered, 17 have shown lesions of TB. A sick steer, slaughtered on the property was also confirmed to be infected by examinations at RVL Orange.

The herd of origin and all neighbours have been quarantined and arrangements to test all cattle are in hand. (Contact: Roy Everett, 063 913 719).

Anthrax

During December, anthrax was confirmed on three properties at,

Rankin Springs	RLPB Narrandera	20/200 mixed sheep
Merriwagga	RLPB Hay	60/1100 ewes & lambs
Condobolin	RLPB Condobolin	7/50 ewes

In the second incident, most of the deaths were in unvaccinated lambs running in a paddock in which anthrax was diagnosed in March 1995. Control procedures were also undertaken in a further mortality in 12/800 merino wethers at Merriwagga (Hay district) which was highly suggestive of anthrax. However, carcasses had deteriorated badly and it was not confirmed at the laboratory.

Anthrax has only been confirmed in the Hay, Narrandera and Condobolin districts in the six months, July-December 1995. Despite the previously dry conditions over most of the Orana region, there have been no confirmed cases. Anthrax was excluded in two separate sheep and cattle mortalities in the Coonamble district, and also, in the south, in recently weaned lambs in the Albury district.

The new State policy on anthrax (Circular AI 96/5) was released on 10 January 1996 and distributed to official field veterinarians and inspectors (Contact: Laurie Pryde, Dubbo, 068 811 275).

Enzootic Bovine Leucosis Program

The November 1995 round of bulk milk testing (BMT) detected antibodies in 235 herds (ie 12.5% of the State's 1874 dairy herds). In the BMT positive herds, the estimated EBL prevalence within the milking group of cattle that had contributed to the vat sample were:

Less than 5% - 73 herds	(31.1%)
Between 5% & 15% - 118 herds	(50.2%)
More than 15% - 44 herds	(18.7%)

The current distribution of EBL statuses of the State's dairy herds is as follows:

Accredited free	-	0.1%
Tested Negative	-	3.0%
Monitored Negative	-	1.3%
BMT Negative	-	66.5%
Provisionally clear	-	0.8%
Infected	-	25.8%
Not assessed	-	2.5%

Most infected herds have undertaken a herd test subsidised by the NSW Cattle Compensation Fund. (Contact: Richard Zelski, Maitland, 049 302 419).

Johne's disease developments

Standard diagnostic methods for, and recommendations for research into, JD in cattle in Australia were developed at a workshop held in Melbourne in early December. The diagnostic methods will be applied to the National JD Market Assurance Program and to respective State's disease control programmes (Contact: Ray Webb, Orange, 063 913 689).

The development of a NSW strategic plan for ovine Johne's disease is proceeding under the JD - Sheep Industry Steering

Committee. A second flock has been confirmed in the Albury district and a third in the Young district. Until December, the known distribution of ovine JD in Australia was restricted to central and southern NSW, however Agriculture Victoria has notified that confirmation of ovine JD in two flocks in East Gippsland (*Contact: Laurie Denholm, Orange, 063 913 863*).

Rabbit Calicivirus

RCD was confirmed at a third site in the Broken Hill district during the period. Surveillance in surrounding districts and investigations of rabbit deaths across the State have not found any evidence of further spread. Regular inspections are being undertaken at up to five heavily populated locations in each of the Wanaaring, Wilcannia and Wentworth RLPB districts (*Contact: Graeme Eggleston, Orange, 063 913 683*).

Disease Surveys and Studies

Arbovirus surveillance

Early seasonal activity of palyam virus was detected in samples collected in December from sentinel herds at Casino (9/10 positive) and Raleigh (8/10) on the north coast. (*Contact: Peter Kirkland, Menangle, 046 293 333*).

Review of ovine brucellosis testing

Recent Surveillance reports have noted the high prevalence of ovine brucellosis in commercial flocks in NSW. During 1995, NSW Agriculture's veterinary laboratories tested a total of 36,400 samples by the *Br ovis* CFT with the following results.

<u>Reason for Test</u>	<u>No Accession</u>	<u>No tested</u>	<u>% Positive</u>
Accreditation	980	24 592	1.5
Monitoring	264	5 665	8.7
Diagnostic	319	5 370	16.3

(Source: Labsys 12.1.96)

Most of the monitoring testing has been of commercial flocks.

Developments in Disease Recording and Reporting

Laboratory submission handbook

The new laboratory specimen submission manual was distributed during the period to submitters to NSW Agriculture's veterinary laboratories and to final year veterinary students at Camden. The long awaited manual is a valued aid for field veterinarians' disease surveillance (*Contact: Graeme Eamens, Menangle, 046 293 333*).

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 NSW. If you would like more specific information about diseases occurring in your part of the State, contact your local RLPB District Veterinarian or departmental Senior Field Veterinary Officer or Regional Veterinary Laboratory. For statewide information contact NSW Agriculture's Quality Assurance and Animal Health Program in Orange, 063 913 237.

Thanks

As this will be the last NSW Surveillance Report that I coordinate, I would like to thank the many people servicing the health of State's livestock for their support and contribution to the surveillance and assurance of animal health status during the past 3 years. Although moving into the private sector, I am looking forward to continued involvement with animal health issues and programs.

David Kennedy
Program Leader, Animal Health
Surveillance
NSW Agriculture
Locked Bag 21 ORANGE 2800
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EXOTIC DISEASE INVESTIGATIONS NSW 1995

Note: 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.

No	Month	Locality (RLPB)*	Animal	Disease Suspected	Diagnosis	Response ^b
1	Jan	Young	Horse	Equine morbillivirus (EMV)	Thoracic abscess	2
2	Jan	Deniliquin	Sheep	Pulmonary adenomatosis	Pneumonia	1,2,3
3	Jan	Lismore	Chicken	Avian influenza (AI)	Stress	1,2,3,5,6
4*	Feb	Eastern Ck quarantine station	Dog	Tropical canine pancytopenia	Ehrlichia canis confirmed	2,3
5*	Feb	Wagga Wagga	Person	Dermatobia hominis	Confirmed	0
6	Mar	Goulburn	Chicken	AI	ILT	1
7	Apr	Tenterfield	Ostrich	Newcastle disease (ND)	Avirulent	1,2,3,5
8	Apr	Uralla	Ostrich	ND	Negative	1,2,5
9	Apr	Armidale	Ostrich	ND	Negative	1,2,5
10	Jun	Moss Vale	Chicken	AI	Negative	0
11	Jun	Moss Vale	Chicken	ND or AI	Negative	2,3
12	Jun	Lismore	Cattle	Rabies	Non-suppurative encephalitis	2,3
13	Jun	Armidale	Horse	EMV	Purpura haemorrhagica plus strangles	2,3
14	Jul	Gundagai	Cattle	Rinderpest	Necrobacillosis	1,2
15	Jul	Kempsey	Sheep	Bluetongue	Hypoprotein-aemia	0
16	Jul	Braidwood	Horses	EMV	Negative	0
17	Oct	Wagga Wagga	Horses	EMV	Negative	1,2,3
18	Oct	Grafton	Horse	EMV	Negative	1,2,3
19	Oct	Moss Vale	Horse	EMV	Negative	1,2,3
20	Oct	Condobolin	Horse	EMV	Pyrrolizidine alkaloidosis	1,2
21	Oct	Moss Vale	Cattle	FMD	Bovine papular stomatitis	1,2
22	Oct	Grafton	Cattle	FMD	Negative	1,2
23	Oct	Dubbo	Horse	EMV	Negative	2,3

24	Nov	Armidale	Horse	EMV	Negative	2
25	Nov	Moss Vale	Bees	Varroa mite	Pollen mite	1,2
26	Nov	Gundagai	Horses	EMV	Negative	2,3
27	Nov	Narrandera	Horses	EMV	Negative	2,3
28	Nov	Casino	Horses	EMV	Negative	2,3
29#	Dec	Moss Vale	Cattle	FMD	Pestivirus	1,2
30	Dec	Maitland, Coonamble	Horses	EMV	Whitewood poisoning	1,2,3
31	Dec	Moss Vale	Horses	EMV	Strep zoo- epidemicus	2,3

Key

a Rural Lands Protection Board

b Response:

- 0 Handled by telephone and correspondence
- 1 Field investigation by animal health officer
- 2 State laboratory investigation
- 3 Specimens to AAHL, CSIRO Entomology, or other national reference laboratory
- 4 Specimens overseas
- 5 Regulatory action: Quarantine imposed, or Police or other official agency involved
- 6 Alert/Standby
- 7 Operations activated

Investigation initiated by Disease Watch hotline call

* Exotic disease confirmed

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