

**Queensland Government  
Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation  
Queensland Health**

5 January 2012

**New Hendra virus case in Townsville area**

A deceased horse on a property in the Townsville area has returned a positive test result for Hendra virus infection.

Queensland Chief Veterinary Officer, Dr Rick Symons said the horse had shown rapid onset of illness.

"The horse died on Tuesday and the positive result for the virus came back late last night," Dr Symons said.

"The veterinarian who attended the horse used the proper precautions including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

"Biosecurity Queensland is in the process of quarantining this property and will test and monitor the other five horses at this location over the next month."

Queensland's Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young said public health experts would visit the property today to assess the situation and determine how many people, if any, had contact with the infected horse.

"Queensland Health staff will continue to undertake contact tracing work to ensure all people potentially exposed to the sick horse have been identified," Dr Young said.

"Queensland Health stands ready to provide any assistance, counselling, information, testing or treatment that may be required."

Dr Symons said a Hendra virus case in the middle of summer was unusual, although it had occurred before.

"There was a previous case in the Townsville area in December 2004," he said.

"Even though the majority of cases tend to occur in the July-September period, we have consistently said that Hendra virus infection can occur throughout the year.

"Horse owners should not be complacent and as much as possible keep horses away from areas where there is flying fox activity.

“We will deal with this latest case just as we have with previous cases through a process of quarantine, testing and monitoring.

“In each Hendra virus incident the property has been isolated and there has been no spread of the infection to another property.”

Up to date information on Hendra virus is available at [www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au](http://www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au), including important workplace health and safety information for horse properties and other horse related businesses, and details of upcoming public information sessions in the Townsville area.

There are also recently updated veterinarian guidelines: "[Guidelines for veterinarians handling potential Hendra virus infections in horses](#)".

For more information contact Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or visit [www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au](http://www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au)

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