

Emergency animal diseases

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Emergency animal diseases are diseases that, if they occur in Australia, are likely to have severe consequences in terms of livestock productivity, trade or possibly even human health.

By remaining vigilant and acting quickly if you suspect an emergency animal disease, you may be able to prevent these consequences.

What is an emergency animal disease?

An emergency animal disease is defined nationally as a disease that meets one or more of the following criteria.

- It is a known disease that does not normally occur in Australia, and for which it is considered to be in the national interest for the country to be free from the disease.
- It is a variation of a disease that does occur normally in Australia, but this variation, if established here, would have a national impact.
- It is a serious infectious disease of unknown or uncertain cause, which may, on the evidence available at the time, be an entirely new disease or one not included in the national list of emergency diseases.
- It is a disease that does occur sporadically in Australia, but is occurring in such a severe outbreak form that an emergency response is required to ensure that there is neither a large scale epidemic of national significance, nor serious loss of market access.

In NSW the term 'emergency animal disease' includes any disease that is:

- included in the national Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA), and/or
- declared as an exotic disease under the *NSW Animal Diseases (Emergency Outbreaks) Act 1991*, and/or
- declared at any time by the Chief Veterinary Officer of NSW (CVO) to be an emergency animal disease.

What should I do if I suspect an emergency animal disease?

Members of the public are strongly encouraged to contact a veterinarian if they suspect an emergency animal disease. This can be a Rural Lands Protection Board (RLPB) District Veterinarian, a Department of Primary Industries (DPI) veterinarian, or a private vet.

National campaigns such as, 'Look. Check. Ask a vet.' and 'Seen anything unusual lately?' are all aimed at vigilance and rapid reporting.

Most emergency animal diseases are already included in the list of diseases that are notifiable. This means there is a legal obligation on members of the public such as stock owners, veterinarians and other persons consulted about animals, to notify authorities as soon as they know or even just suspect the presence of a notifiable disease. [Primefact 402 'Notifiable animal diseases in NSW'](#) explains exactly how to notify.

What about the 1800 hotline number?

1800 675 888 is the national Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline.

The hotline was originally developed for reporting by veterinarians but is now publicly available. You should not use it for routine animal health inquiries, but if you suspect an emergency disease, you can report it immediately on the hotline which is staffed 24 hours a day.

Where can I get more information?

For more information about emergency animal diseases you should contact your local RLPB District Veterinarian, a DPI veterinarian, or your private vet.

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (November 2008). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of New South Wales Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser.
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