

5 February 2024

CHIEF VETERINARY OFFICER BULLETIN

Point of Care Testing for Prohibited Matter

Point of care testing for prohibited matter – know your biosecurity duty.

Summary

Using a point-of-care test to test for prohibited matter is prohibited in NSW*. If you suspect prohibited matter, you must immediately report it to an Authorised Officer by contacting the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888 or Local Land Services on 1300 795 299. Samples for prohibited matter must be submitted to the NSW Animal and Plant Health Laboratories at Elizabeth Macarthur Agriculture Institute (EMAI) for testing.

Prohibited Matter

- Prohibited matter pests and diseases of animals includes both exotic agents and agents that cause sporadic infections of animals of significance to the economy, community and environment in NSW .
 - Exotic pests and diseases of animals are not present in NSW and have the potential to cause major adverse impacts. The [Notifiable pests and diseases of animals in NSW primefact](#) lists these pest and diseases and outlines the notification process.
 - Prohibited matter sporadic pests and diseases of animals are sporadically occurring endemic pests and diseases of animals listed as prohibited matter under the Biosecurity Act 2015. At the time of writing this bulletin, these sporadic diseases are Hendra virus infection (other than in flying foxes), anthrax and Australian bat lyssavirus other than in bats.
 - It is your biosecurity duty to immediately notify an authorised officer you suspect, or are aware, that an animal is infested or infected with prohibited matter by contacting the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888 or Local Land Services on 1300 795 299.
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Point of Care Tests and Prohibited Matter

Veterinary point of care tests provide field-based or “pen-side” diagnostic information about disease states in animals. Implementation of point of care tests will support more equitable and efficient access to veterinary testing across NSW, improving animal health outcomes and enhancing surveillance and emergency disease response activities. However, misuse or misinterpretation of tests and inaccurate test results for prohibited matter diseases represents a significant biosecurity risk with implications for producers, vets, communities, and industries.

Due to these risks, **point of care testing for prohibited matter is prohibited in NSW***:

- It is an offence under Section 28 of the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015 to deal with prohibited matter, and clause 4 of the Biosecurity Regulation 2017 states that testing for the presence of biosecurity matter is a dealing.
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- *Use of a point of care test for prohibited matter can only be conducted under an exemption order or prohibited matter permit. The anthrax immunchromatographic antigen detection assay (ICT) produced by the national Anthrax reference laboratory may be used by trained veterinarians under the Prohibited Matter (Diagnostics) Exemption Order 2019.

Know your Biosecurity Duty

Do not use a point of care test for Prohibited Matter*

More information can be found in the NSW Policy - Point of Care tests for prohibited matter in NSW. Requirements for point of care test use, operator competency and clinical governance are included in the Procedure – Use of Point of Care tests for Prohibited Matter. Requirements for test/device validation and provisional recognition and use are detailed in Procedure – Validation for Point of Care tests for Prohibited Matter.