

## Biosecurity - Reporting notifiable pests and diseases of animals and biosecurity events

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### Management of the biosecurity risk

The purpose of this procedure is to advise staff on how to report prohibited matter, other notifiable pests and diseases of animals and biosecurity events.

### Scope

The *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the Act) promotes biosecurity as a shared responsibility between government, industry and communities. This procedure is a State Priority for NSW and should be read in conjunction with the policies '[Surveillance for Animal Pests and Diseases](#)', '[Prohibited Matter Pests and Diseases of Animals](#)', and '[Endemic Pests and Diseases of Animals](#)'. The procedure applies to the NSW Department of Primary Industry (NSW DPI), an office within the Department of Regional NSW, and Local Land Services (LLS) in their role as authorised officers under the Act.

This procedure details the reporting process and responsibilities for:

1. prohibited matter
2. other notifiable pests and diseases of animals (that are not prohibited matter)
3. biosecurity events and other significant events.

This procedure does not cover reporting requirements for aquatic biosecurity pests and diseases. Refer to the [Procedure – Aquatic pests and diseases – responding to reports](#)

### Biosecurity legislation summary

The pests and diseases of animals that are classified as prohibited matter are listed in Schedule 2 of the Act. This list includes exotic emergency animal diseases (such as foot and mouth disease) and other emergency animal diseases (such as anthrax and Hendra virus.) A person who owns or is caring for animals, or a person working in their professional capacity such as a veterinarian, has a duty to **immediately** notify an authorised officer if they suspect, or are aware, that the animals are infested or infected with prohibited matter.

The pests and diseases of animals that are notifiable, but are not prohibited matter, are listed in Schedule 1 of the Biosecurity Regulation 2017 (the Regulation). A person who owns or is caring for animals, or a person working in their professional capacity such as a veterinarian, has a duty to notify

an authorised officer **within one working day** if they suspect, or are aware, that the animals are infested or infected with a notifiable pest or disease of animals which is not prohibited matter.

Under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, a **biosecurity event** means an occurrence that is likely to have an adverse effect on the economy, the environment or the community that is caused by biosecurity matter or by dealing with that biosecurity matter.

The Biosecurity Regulation 2017 declares the following to be biosecurity events in animals:

- a) the appearance of ulcers or blisters on the mouth or feet of ruminants or pigs,
- b) an unexplained and significant increase in a mortality rate or morbidity rate in animals,
- c) an unexplained and significant fall in production relating to animals,
- d) the appearance of other unexplained and significant clinical signs in animals including, but not limited to, unexplained neurological signs or conditions.

Biosecurity events include new or emerging disease events, a significant disease event from a listed notifiable disease (other than prohibited matter), prohibited feed events such as feeding of 'swill' to pigs or restricted animal material (RAM) to ruminants, or chemical contamination events.

The collection, use and disclosure of information in accordance with this procedure, including any internal or external discussion or distribution of information, must be in compliance with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* or be exempted by the operation of section 387 of the Act.

Section 387 (2) of the Act provides authority for the disclosure of information about a person, without the consent of the person: to a public sector agency, or to any other person, but only if the disclosure is reasonably necessary for the purpose of exercising a biosecurity risk function.

### **Work Health and Safety**

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* places an obligation on the agency (NSW DPI and LLS) as a person conducting a business or undertaking and workers to provide a safe and healthy workplace. Safe Work Method Statements that support activities included in this procedure must be used in identifying, assessing and controlling risks.

NSW DPI and LLS will work together to create a safe and supportive work environment when undertaking any activities for this procedure.

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# Reporting notifiable pests and diseases of animals and biosecurity events procedure

## 1. Reporting prohibited matter for pests and diseases of animals and biosecurity events

### 1.1 Responsibility of the public (for information)

The duty to report the occurrence of prohibited matter and biosecurity events is outlined in the Act and the Regulation. A person (including the owner, or person in charge of a carrier or premises or thing, or a person consulting in their professional capacity) who becomes aware of or suspects the occurrence of a prohibited matter or a biosecurity event has a biosecurity duty to verbally notify an authorised officer immediately. The [Primefact 'Notifiable animal pests and diseases of animals in NSW'](#) outlines how the public can contact an authorised officer and what information is required to be included in the report.

### 1.2 Responsibility of veterinarians submitting samples (for information)

A veterinarian who attends an animal and forms the opinion that there is a medium or high likelihood of a prohibited matter disease has a responsibility to immediately and verbally notify an authorised officer by phoning the Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 88, or, during business hours, by phoning their Local Land Services on 1300 795 299.

In the case of exclusion testing where the likelihood of a prohibited matter diseases is low but the potential impact is high, for example, high-risk human exposure to Hendra virus infection (e.g. needle-stick injury when treating a horse showing neurological signs) or any likelihood of an exotic disease such as African Swine Fever or Foot and Mouth Disease, then the veterinarian should report immediately and verbally as above.

A veterinarian who is submitting samples for testing for prohibited matter for exclusion testing, where in their opinion the likelihood of a prohibited matter disease is low and the potential impact is low, does not have a biosecurity duty to immediately notify. These circumstances include submitting samples for testing for routine WHS purposes for exclusion of zoonotic diseases such as Hendra virus infection.

The attending veterinarian should telephone the Laboratory Services Customer Service Unit on 1800 675 623 when submitting any samples for diagnostic testing for prohibited matter diseases to NSW DPI Laboratory Services - regardless of the likelihood or potential impact of the prohibited matter disease. Where samples are being submitted only to meet export requirements and there is no suspicion of prohibited matter disease, the veterinarian does not need to phone the Customer Services Unit.

## 2 Responsibilities of NSW Department of Primary Industries and Local Land Services staff

Staff working for NSW DPI and LLS (if they are not an authorised officer who is a veterinarian) must report any information regarding suspicion or awareness of prohibited matter or a biosecurity event immediately and verbally to an authorised officer who is a veterinarian.

A NSW DPI/LLS authorised officer who is a veterinarian and receives a report which is assessed (usually by the attending veterinarian) as a medium to high likelihood of being prohibited matter and/or the potential impact is high and potentially in need of additional urgent management action, for example:

- An incident in school or preschool,
- A significant exposure to high risk zoonotic agent,
- An incident in a congregation point,
- An incident in a processing plant,
- An incident causing public alarm via media or social media.

must report immediately via their organisation's reporting chain (see section 2.3).

Investigation of suspected prohibited matter incidents, including prioritisation of reports as green (no/low likelihood), amber (moderate likelihood) or red (high likelihood) must be undertaken as per the [Procedure - Prohibited matter pests and diseases of animals– investigation and alert phase of an emergency response](#).

NSW DPI (Laboratory Services) must be advised if samples are being submitted for prohibited matter diagnostic testing by telephoning the Laboratory Services Customer Services Unit on 1800 675 623 or by emailing [laboratory.services@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:laboratory.services@dpi.nsw.gov.au).

## **2.1 Responsibilities of NSW Department of Primary Industries Laboratory Services**

NSW DPI Laboratory Services Customer Service Unit staff who receive a call relating to prohibited matter will elevate the case as per the work instruction [EAD Inquiry Calls](#) if the submitter advises that they suspect prohibited matter disease (rather than just doing a routine exclusion).

The NSW DPI Duty Veterinary Pathologist or Virologist who receives notification of, or samples from, a case which in their opinion has a medium to high likelihood of being prohibited matter must report immediately to the DCVO/CVO.

## **2.2 Reporting chain for NSW Department of Primary Industries staff**

A NSW DPI authorised officer who is a veterinarian and receives a report which is assessed as a medium to high likelihood of being prohibited matter or a biosecurity event, or a report where there is a factor that makes the potential incident high risk and in need of additional urgent management actions (as above) must report immediately to:

- The NSW DPI species/ program coordinator (during business hours), and the
- The LLS Team Leader of Animal Biosecurity and Welfare (LLS Team Leader) of the affected region/s, and the
- The NSW Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer (DCVO)/ NSW DPI Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO).

## **2.3 Reporting chain for Local Land Services staff**

An LLS authorised officer who is a veterinarian and receives a report which is assessed as a medium to high likelihood of being prohibited matter or a biosecurity event, or a report where there is a factor that makes the potential incident high risk and in need of additional urgent management actions (as above) must report immediately to the LLS Team Leader of the LLS region where the suspect prohibited matter or biosecurity event has occurred.

The LLS Team Leader must report verbally and immediately to the LLS Manager Biosecurity & Emergency Services (LLS MBES) of the LLS region where the suspect prohibited matter or biosecurity event has occurred (in regions which have a MBES).

The LLS Team Leader or LLS Manager Biosecurity & Emergency Services must report verbally and immediately to the DCVO/ CVO during business hours, or to the Animal Disease Hotline out of hours.

Where an officer or staff member of NSW DPI or LLS is not available to undertake a reporting responsibility outlined in this procedure, an equivalent officer can fulfil this role. If an equivalent officer is unavailable, the next most senior position will assume this responsibility and must be contacted.

The document [Chain of authority Animal Biosecurity](#) outlines the chain of authority and has links to relevant contact details for reporting positions outlined in this procedure.

## **2.4 Communication/ distribution of laboratory results for prohibited matter**

NSW DPI Laboratory Services maintains a live distribution process document that contains the contact details for distribution of laboratory results.

Communication to the DCVO/ CVO:

- any confirmations of prohibited matter or equivocal test results must be reported immediately to the DCVO/CVO by the NSW DPI Duty Veterinarian, Pathologist or Virologist
- laboratory reports with negative test results for prohibited matter must be reported promptly to the DCVO/ CVO by NSW DPI laboratory staff.

NSW DPI (Laboratory Services) will email laboratory reports from:

- negative test results for prohibited matter to the DCVOs, CVO, DPI species/program coordinator, the team leader and LLS Manager Biosecurity & Emergency Services for the relevant LLS region and sample submitter
- confirmed and inconclusive prohibited matter cases (following direction from the CVO) to the NSW DCVOs, CVO, NSW DPI species/program coordinator, the LLS Team Leader and LLS Manager Biosecurity & Emergency Services for the relevant LLS region and sample submitter.

## **2.5 Responsibilities for the NSW Chief Veterinary Officer**

The CVO (or their delegate) will notify positive results for a prohibited matter cases to:

- the local LLS District Veterinarian
- LLS Manager Biosecurity & Emergency Services and the LLS Team Leader of the LLS region where the suspect prohibited matter event has occurred
- NSW DPI Species/ program coordinator
- NSW DPI DDG Biosecurity and Food Safety
- NSW DPI Manager Public Affairs
- NSW Health
- The Australian Chief Veterinary Officer.

In the event of a prohibited matter disease incident, the CVO's initial responsibilities are outlined in the [Procedure – 'Biosecurity – Prohibited matter pests and diseases of animals – investigation and alert phase of an emergency response'](#). An incident is defined in the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA) as a confirmed emergency animal disease or a reasonably held suspicion of an emergency animal disease. Reporting responsibilities of the CVO in the event of a disease incident are outlined in the resource document - '[Prohibited matter animal pest or disease initial communication checklist](#)'.

## **3. Reporting notifiable diseases that are not prohibited matter**

Pests and diseases of animals that are notifiable (and not classified as prohibited matter) are listed in Schedule 1 (Part 1) of the Regulation. This list includes endemic animal diseases such as footrot in sheep and goats, chlamydiosis in poultry and other birds and Johne's disease.

### **3.1 Responsibility for owners and private veterinarians to report other notifiable diseases (for information)**

The duty to report notifiable pests and diseases of animals (that are not prohibited matter) is outlined in the Regulation. A person (which is defined to include the owner, or person in charge of a carrier or premises or thing, or a person consulting in their professional capacity) who becomes aware of or suspects the occurrence a notifiable disease in this category must notify within one working day. The [Primefact 'Notifiable animal pests and diseases of animals in NSW'](#) outlines how the public can contact an authorised officer and what information is required to be included in the report.

### **3.2 Responsibilities for NSW Department of Primary Industries and Local Land Services staff**

Staff working for NSW DPI or LLS (if they are not an authorised officer who is a veterinarian) must report any information regarding suspicion or awareness of notifiable pests and diseases of animals that are not prohibited matter promptly to an authorised officer who is a veterinarian.

A NSW DPI or LLS authorised officer who is a veterinarian and receives verbal, phone or written reports (including notifiable animal disease forms and emergency hotline enquires) regarding notifiable diseases that are not prohibited matter must contact the relevant LLS Team Leader with the details for further investigation as required.

The NSW DPI (Animal Biosecurity) team member who is managing the animal biosecurity inbox and receives laboratory reports for notifiable diseases from external laboratories other than NSW DPI Laboratory Services (such as private veterinary laboratories) will email these reports promptly to the relevant NSW DPI species/program coordinator email address and the relevant LLS Team Leader.

### 3.3 Responsibilities for NSW Department of Primary Industries (Laboratory Services)

Laboratory staff will email the laboratory reports from NSW DPI (Laboratory Services) for all notifiable pests and diseases of animals (that are not prohibited matter) with positive or negative results to the relevant NSW DPI species/ program coordinator, and the team leader of the relevant LLS region.

NSW DPI (Laboratory Services) maintains a live distribution process document that contains the contact details for distribution of laboratory results.

#### 4. Record keeping

Reports and details relating to prohibited matter, notifiable diseases and other biosecurity events are to be entered into the NSW information management system as immediately as is practically possible (including LHMS).

Guidelines for data entry are outlined in the [LHMS guidance document](#).

Responsibilities to enter data around these reports include:

- Animal Disease Hotline operators are responsible for entering details of a report taken on the hotline into Livestock Health Management System (LHMS)
- the relevant LLS staff are responsible for entering all laboratory test results for diagnostic disease testing for notifiable diseases into LHMS (including reports from government, interstate and private laboratories).

(Non-diagnostic testing for export purposes, bull sales, National Arbovirus Monitoring Program etc. are captured by Sample Manager and do not need to be entered into LHMS).

#### 5. Zoonoses

NSW Health must be notified immediately when:

- animals are assessed as likely to be infected with a pest or disease with serious zoonotic potential, or
- animals are confirmed as being infected with a pest or disease with serious zoonotic potential, or
- there has been high risk human contact with a suspect animal (e.g. in a suspect Hendra virus case).

##### 5.1 Responsibilities for NSW Department of Primary Industries staff in notifying NSW Health

The NSW DPI authorised officer who triages a possible or confirmed zoonotic disease case will notify NSW State Public Health. This could be NSW DPI (Animal Biosecurity) team member who is rostered onto hotline duty who first receives the initial notification or the species/ program coordinator.

Contact details for NSW Health are available in the [Animal Biosecurity Emergency Hotline procedure](#).

##### 5.2 Responsibilities for Local Land Services staff in notifying NSW Health

The LLS Team Leader will notify their local [NSW Public Health Unit](#) of a possible or confirmed zoonotic disease case.

#### 6. Definitions and acronyms

the Act	the <i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i>
Authorised officer	A person who is appointed as an authorised officer under the Biosecurity Act and authorised by that appointment to exercise the function in relation to which the expression is used.
CVO:	NSW Chief Veterinary Officer
DCVO:	Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer
EADRA	Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement
Endemic disease:	A disease that is endemic to NSW
Exotic disease:	A disease that is exotic to NSW
LLS:	Local Land Services

LLS Team Leader	LLS Team Leader Animal Biosecurity and Welfare
LHMS:	Livestock Health and Management System
MBES:	Manager Biosecurity and Emergency Services
NSW DPI:	New South Wales Department of Primary Industries
PIC	Property Identification Code
The Regulation	the Biosecurity Regulation 2017
TLABW:	LLS Team Leader Animal Biosecurity and Welfare
Authorised officer	
who is a veterinarian:	An authorised officer who is also a veterinarian working for NSW DPI or LLS
Veterinarian:	A person who is registered under the <i>Veterinary Practice Act 2003</i> .

## 7. Documentation

[Policy – Prohibited matter pests and diseases of animals](#)

[Policy- Surveillance for pests and diseases of animals](#)

Policy - Biosecurity collection, use and disclosure of information

Procedure- Biosecurity collection, use and disclosure of information

Policy Records Management (IND-I-177)

Policy - Information Security (IND-I-197)

Policy - Classified Information (IND-I-196)

Policy - Government Information (Public Access) (IND-I-178)

Procedure - Emergency animal disease hotline - management of system

[Procedure - Prohibited matter pests and diseases of animals– investigation and alert phase of an emergency response.](#)

Procedure - Declaring notifiable diseases

Primefact - Notifiable animal diseases in NSW

Primefact – Prohibited matter in NSW

Resource document – Chain of authority animal biosecurity

Resource document – Prohibited matter animal pest or disease – initial communication checklist

Resource document - LHMS guidance document

## 8. Records

Reports and details relating to Prohibited matter, notifiable diseases and other biosecurity events are to be entered into the NSW information management system (including LHMS/ BIS).

Guidelines for data entry are outlined in the LHMS guidance document.

Records relating to properties placed under biosecurity restrictions must be maintained for at least ten years.

## 9. Revision history

Version	Date issued	Notes	By
1	01/07/2017	Complete revision - response to the <i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i> .	Animal Biosecurity and Welfare
2	21/08/2020	Updated in relation to the definition of a biosecurity event in the Biosecurity Regulation 2017; provided clarification about the difference between suspected prohibited matter and exclusion testing	Animal Biosecurity

## 10. Contact

Biosecurity NSW – General Enquires  
 1800 808 095  
[biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au)



## Reporting prohibited matter

