

## National TSE Surveillance Project

### Changes to the Operation of the TSE program in NSW

Issue: Animal Health Australia (AHA) have indicated there will be limits to the number of cases that can be submitted by NSW in 2020/21. NSW DPI has responsibility to manage submissions to not exceed the limit.

To be eligible as a TSE case, submissions will need to meet all the national requirements and additional NSW requirements.

National Requirements (from the [National TSE Surveillance Project \(NTSESP\) National Guidelines for Field Operations](#))

Incentive Eligibility Criteria - Clinically Consistent Payments for submission (producer incentive, vet fee rebate, collect and document, and freight), TSE laboratory tests and other laboratory tests to investigate alternate diagnoses may be claimed from the NTSESP incentive scheme for clinically consistent submissions that meet the eight incentive eligibility criteria below.

- Species – only cattle and sheep are eligible for payment.
- Live examination – the animal must be examined while alive by the submitting veterinarian or biosecurity officer to independently establish the clinical state prior to euthanasia and sampling.  
*NB This can be met by the submitting veterinarian or biosecurity officer viewing video eg mobile phone, of one or both animals while alive to select the neurological and behavioural changes consistent with BSE or scrapie.*
- Age –
  - cattle must be at least 30 months but less than nine years of age
  - sheep must be 18 months of age or older (preferably less than 5 years)
- Clinically consistent animal – the animal must have at least two clinical signs consistent with BSE or scrapie as per the Clinical History and Post-Mortem Report Form
- Sample type and quality – submitters must submit complete samples of the correct tissues (brain and spinal cord) of diagnostic quality for TSE evaluation to a participating laboratory as per these national guidelines.  
*NB This requires fixed brain and fresh spinal cord for sheep and cattle. In addition, fresh cerebellum must be submitted for sheep.*
- Completion of required forms - each submission must include completed documentation as per the policy and procedures of the relevant agency including a completed Laboratory Submission Form and Clinical History and Post-Mortem Report Form (Appendix 4) or equivalent.
- 1 or 2 animals only per disease incident per property.  
*NB The incentive payments (producer incentive, vet fee rebate, collect and document, and freight, TSE laboratory tests) are capped at 2 animals per disease event per property. Other laboratory tests to investigate alternate diagnoses can exceed the 2 limit but are limited to a reasonable number of animals, typically 2-3 but no more than 5.*
- Conflict of interest – the submitting veterinarian or biosecurity officer must not have an actual or perceived conflict of interest with the recipient of a payment arising from the NTSESP (e.g. a financial or family link to them); or must satisfy the relevant state agency that a clinically consistent animal could not

have been reasonably submitted by an alternative veterinarian or biosecurity officer without an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

### Additional NSW specific eligibility criteria

#### Cattle

- Cattle submissions must record the mob average Body condition score (BCS) on the specimen advice form (SAF).
- Cases will **not** be accepted from:
  - mobs with average BCS  $\leq 2$  unless there are obvious neurological signs. If a veterinarian considers obvious neurological signs do exist in mobs with BCS  $\leq 2$ , prior approval will be required from the TSE Coordinator before testing of samples. See instructions below.
  - **Periparturient cows and heifers**- this is defined as animals that have commenced calving to 1-week post calving. If a veterinarian considers obvious neurological signs do exist in periparturient cows, prior approval will be required from the TSE Coordinator before testing of samples. See instructions below.
- Prior approval requires require collection of all required samples and completion of SAF. The completed SAF must be emailed to [graham.bailey@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:graham.bailey@dpi.nsw.gov.au) and cced to [kate.wingett@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kate.wingett@dpi.nsw.gov.au) (Till end September 2020. Alternate will be advised). On receipt of SAF, the TSE coordinator, will make a prompt decision regarding eligibility (this may on occasions involve talking to the vet) and will advise the submitter by return email with the State Veterinary Laboratory copied into the response.
- If you have not received a response within your required time frame, contact Graham Bailey on 0400 998 232 or, if not available, Kate Wingett on 0438 549 459.
- PLEASE NOTE: If you require prior approval, cases with primary weakness, recumbency and/or ataxia, without other obvious neurological signs will be rejected.

#### Sheep

- Sheep submissions must record the mob average body condition score (BCS) on the SAF.
- Cases will not be accepted from mobs with average BCS  $\leq 2$  unless there are very obvious neurological signs. If a veterinarian considers obvious neurological signs do exist in mobs with BCS  $\leq 2$ , prior approval will be required from the TSE Coordinator before testing of samples. See instructions under cattle above.

If the TSE Coordinator rejects the case as being eligible for funding under the TSE program, it will be up to the district veterinarian or the private practitioner to decide on what testing should be conducted and how the testing will be paid for. It is up to the submitter to then either alter instructions on the SAF before submission of the samples, or if samples already sent, to advise the laboratory as soon as possible of any changes to testing.

The TSE Coordinator will monitor submissions. Any changes to the additional eligibility requirements will be communicated via the regular e mail sent from the TSE program. It will be submitters responsibility to read that communication to keep up to date.

Graham Bailey

NSW TSE Coordinator