Significant changes to the Operation of the TSE program in NSW

**Issue:** Animal Health Australia (AHA) provided a guide for the purposes of apportioning the budget as to the maximum numbers for each state on 17th October 2019. For NSW the number are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Maximum numbers for 2019/20</th>
<th>2018/9 annual submissions</th>
<th>2019/20 year to date submissions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Background:** Earlier versions of the monthly communications have reported the outcome of the National TSE Surveillance Project review. AHA as the Program Manager has been considering how to balance the requirements of veterinarians and farmers to have a program with incentives to promote submissions against the budget. Submitters will be aware that a number of years ago, the species targets were not met and NSW TSE Coordinator communications promoted submissions. Vets in NSW responded and we are now at the point where in the case of cattle, in 2018/19, NSW submissions were twice the target numbers. In the case of sheep, numbers were on target in 2018/19 but if the year to date trend was to continue, submissions would be 50% above the target.

**NSW DPI Response:** For any field investigations that have occurred up to the date of this communication, the eligibility requirements as recently advised apply. Effective for any on property autopsy from **Monday 28th October 2019** the following applies:

**Cattle**

- Cattle submissions that are considered by the submitter to meet all the eligibility criteria will need to be approved for payment by the TSE Coordinator prior to laboratory testing. This will require collection of all required samples and completion of Specimen Advice Form (SAF) and Clinical History and Post Mortem Report. The completed forms must be emailed to graham.bailey@dpi.nsw.gov.au and cc'd to helen.schaefer@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- On receipt of the forms, 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 in the response.
- If you have not received a response within your required time frame, contact Graham Bailey (TSE Coordinator) on ph: 0400 998 232, or if not available, Helen Schaefer on ph: 0429 476 136
- PLEASE NOTE: Cases with primarily weakness, recumbency and/or ataxia, without other obvious neurological signs will be rejected.
- 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 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 alter the instructions on the SAF before submission of the samples, or if the samples were already sent, to advise the lab as soon as possible.
Sheep

- Sheep submissions must meet all TSE eligibility criteria. In addition, the SAF needs to record mob average Body Condition Score (BCS).
- Cases will not be accepted from mobs with average BCS ≤2 unless there are very obvious neurological signs. If a veterinarian considers obvious neurological signs do exist in mobs BCS ≤2, prior approval will be required from the TSE Coordinator before testing of samples. See instructions in cattle section above.
- The TSE Coordinator will monitor sheep submissions. If a satisfactory decline in the rate of submissions does not occur, more stringent criteria will be applied in the future.