



August 2018

## ***Policy Decision 18-08***

# **Reporting incidents of potential national interest**

Animal Health Committee

## **What to report?**

Disease or other animal health incidents in any animal (recreational, feral, production, companion or wildlife) should be considered of potential national interest and reported directly to the Australian Chief Veterinary Officer (ACVO) in the following situations:

- 1) The disease is or is suspected to be an emergency animal disease pursuant to the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA)<sup>1</sup> or
- 2) The disease or incident, which involves a notifiable or apparent new or emerging aetiological agent, has or is suspected to have public health implications or
- 3) The disease is or is suspected to be a new occurrence of a disease which is on the national list of notifiable animal disease, or a disease not previously recorded in Australia or
- 4) The disease is, or is suspected to be, a new previously unrecorded disease that has, or potentially may have, an impact on:
  - a) public health
  - b) food safety
  - c) market access (national or international)
  - d) biodiversity and/or the environment
  - e) an industry at a regional or national level or
- 5) The disease or incident is causing a significant but unexpected, unusual or abnormal level of morbidity and/or mortality or
- 6) The disease is a known disease but with an unusual, unexpected and/or expanding geographic or host range.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Additional notification and other requirements apply under EADRA.

<sup>2</sup> The reporting guidance was originally endorsed by AHC in AHC08 OOS34. It has been updated to include the reporting incidents of potential public health significance, as part of a One Health approach.

Any significant animal health events that may, as determined by the jurisdictional CVO, be of media (including traditional or social media), political or human health interest, or may be of interest to industry, trading partners or other stakeholders, should also be reported directly to the ACVO, regardless of the assessed risk to animal health or whether they meet the criteria for what to report.

Suspect cases as well as confirmed cases should be reported. Reporting should not be restricted to situations where further action from the Commonwealth/AHC/CCEAD is thought to be needed at the time.

'Routine' exclusions of low likelihood, and incursions of known endemic diseases appearing on the national list of notifiable animal diseases that do not meet the criteria for what to report.

Should continue to primarily be reported through the National Animal Health Information System as appropriate. Sporadic disease events with trade implications, such as anthrax and Hendra virus infection cases, however should be reported directly to the ACVO.

If there is uncertainty about the reporting of any incidents, a conservative approach should be adopted and these should be reported to the ACVO.

Jurisdictional reports to the ACVO are treated as sensitive information. These notifications are required by the Commonwealth to ensure Australia meets its international trade and reporting obligations. They also facilitate national coordination, and the provision of support to the affected jurisdiction/s.

Following consultation, information provided to the ACVO may subsequently be shared confidentially amongst AHC Members, subject to the submitting jurisdiction's agreement.

## **When to report?**

Notifications to the ACVO should be made as soon as possible and in advance of laboratory confirmation. Advance warning of suspect incidents is strongly encouraged.

In addition to an immediate (first) notification, follow-up reports should also be provided, as well as a final report when investigations have been completed and the incident has been assessed to be resolved.

Notifications of any media or other coverage about the incident, should also be reported to the ACVO. Advance warning should be provided where possible when media releases or other attention is planned or anticipated.

## **How to report?**

Notifications should typically be made by the jurisdictional CVO directly to the ACVO.

The reporting template is provided to assist jurisdictional CVOs. However, the completion of the template is not required and should not delay the sharing of information with the ACVO.

Notifications can also be made by telephone or email communications without the template. The reporting CVO should ensure they receive confirmation of receipt of any correspondence from the ACVO, and follow up with the ACVO if this is not received.

Discussions about incursions between the ACVO and reporting jurisdictional CVO are likely to be part of an iterative process, where further questions and reports are provided.

If the incursion may have originated in or poses a risk to another jurisdiction, notification should also be made to the CVO of that jurisdiction as soon as possible.

## **References**

- 1) AHC34\_OOS20\_RESOLUTION

## **More information**

Learn more about the Animal Health Committee.

Email [ahc@agriculture.gov.au](mailto:ahc@agriculture.gov.au)

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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