Frontline for canine ehrilchiosis

Hi all

Northern vets are frontline again – this time for canine ehrlichiosis – recently confirmed in some dogs in the Kimberley, at Katherine and near Alice Springs.

Although this disease isn't part of the NABS Significant Disease Investigation scheme, we are in the right place at the right time to keep a watch out. If you have any suspicion of a case, call the hotline or your regional government vet to work through an investigation. See below for more info about this disease and tips on looking out for cases.

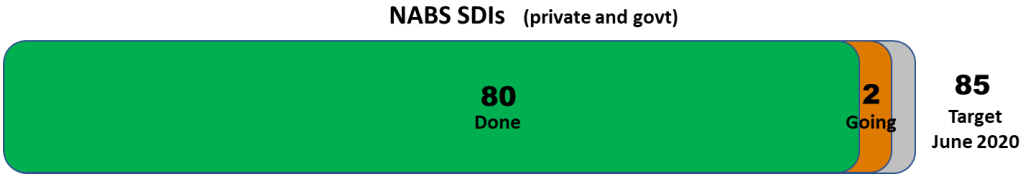
EMERGENCY ANIMAL DISEASE WATCH HOTLINE
1800 675 888

The SDI in this newsletter is a good workup of heifer mortalities in FNQ with a reminder that poisonings occur more often when introduced stock are unfamiliar with toxic plants.

And last but not least, a warm welcome to the new practices and practitioners who have joined the NABS Network in the last couple of months. Looking forward to hear about disease investigations that you undertake.

Cheers Kev

Newsletter #21 (7 July 2020)

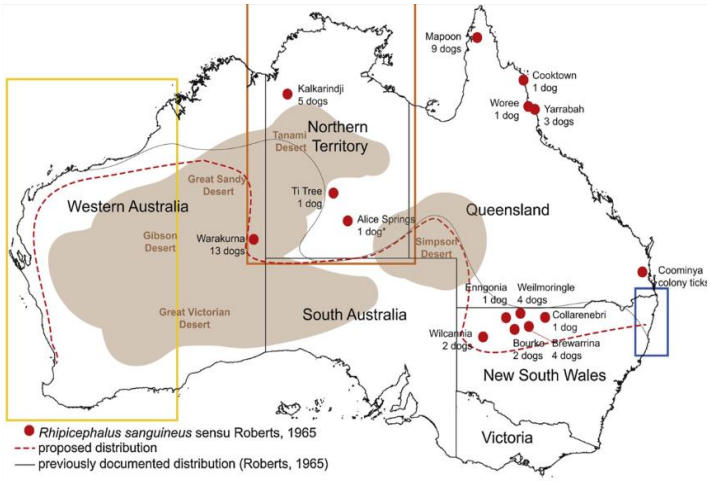


E. canis is transmitted primarily by the brown dog tick Rhipicephalus sanguineus (©2020 WA DPIRD)

Northern vets are frontline for canine ehrlichiosis

An Exotic Disease Found In Australian Dogs: In May 2020 the tick-borne bacteria Ehrlichia canis was confirmed in a small number of dogs in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, and more recently in dogs from Katherine and near Alice Springs, Northern Territory. This is the first time ehrlichiosis has been found in Australia in non-imported dogs.

Ramping Up Surveillance: Infection with E canis is a nationally notifiable disease in Australia. The Consultative Committee for Emergency Animal Diseases is coordinating the response, starting with surveillance in all areas of Australia that have the brown dog tick, to better understand the extent of the potential E canis infection.



From: Chandra, S. *et al* (2020). The brown dog tick *Rhipicephalus sanguineus* sensu Roberts, 1965 across Australia: Morphological and molecular identification of *R. sanguineus* s.l. tropical lineage. Ticks and Tick-borne Diseases, 101305.

Brown dog tick distribution

Clinical Signs: The disease in dogs has an acute phase that lasts 2-4 weeks and is characterised by fever, serous nasal and ocular discharges, anorexia, lethargy and weight loss. Some dogs recover, some become subclinically infected, and some develop the chronic form of the disease (similar signs to the acute phase but more severe).

If You See A Suspect Case: Immediately contact the Emergency Animal Disease Watch hotline (1800 675 888) or the government vet in your area. They will assist with managing the case and advising on sampling requirements. A full diagnostic work-up is an important component of the surveillance phase.

A Potential Zoonosis: Dogs do NOT pass the infection to people. However there have been rare cases where people bitten by infected ticks have developed flu-like symptoms in the following 1-2 weeks. Early treatment with an appropriate course of antibiotic should result in a full recovery.

Further information from Western Australia

- DPIRD webpage https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/ehrlichiosis
- Information on the DPIRD regulations for dog movements out of the Kimberley region https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/sites/gateway/files/FINAL_Factsheet_Kimberley%20Dog%20Biosecurity%20Zone%20movement%20conditions.pdf and Dog movement notification form https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/sites/gateway/files/Factsheet_Ehrlichiosis%20summary%20%2B%20dog%20movement%20notification%20form.pdf
- WA information for dog owners https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/sites/gateway/files/Factsheet_Ehrlichiosis_for%20dog%20owners.pdf

Further information from Northern Territory

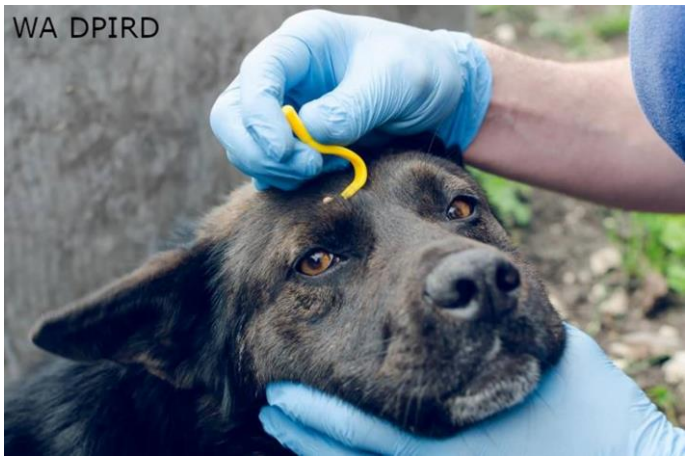
- NTG webpage https://nt.gov.au/ehrlichiosis, fact sheet for vets https://dpir.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/897782/ecanis-factsheet-vets.pdf and case history form https://dpir.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0004/897709/e-canis-exclusion-form.docx
- NT Government community fact sheets https://nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/898528/ecanis-community-information.pdf,

information about treatment https://nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/899501/ehrlichiosis-treatment-info-sheet.pdf
posters for awareness https://nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/898529/ecanis-poster-know-the-signs.pdf
and prevention https://nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/898530/ecanis-poster-prevention-is-key.pdf

Further information from Queensland

- DAF webpage https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/livestock/animal-welfare/pests-diseases-disorders/canine-ehrlichiosis

Overview from the Commonwealth: https://www.outbreak.gov.au/current-responses-to-outbreaks/ehrlichiosis-dogs



Collect bloods (EDTA and serum) and (if available) ticks from the affected dog (Source: WA DPIRD)

A lethal taste for five young FNQ heifers

In the last two weeks of April, five heifers from a mob of 25 became unwell on a property in Far North Queensland.

The mob was an assortment of crossbreeds that had originated from at least six different properties. They had been on the house paddock for months, moved to a new paddock in November 2019, and then returned to the house paddock in late March 2020.

Two animals were seen at the first consult in mid-April. The owner said one had been losing weight, shaking her head, running frequently and was anorexic. Both were pyrexic and one had erosions in her mouth. The Emergency Animal Disease Hotline was notified of the presence of the suspect erosions and blood and tissue samples were sent for vesicular disease testing.

The heifers deteriorated over the next two weeks during which time another three cases occurred. A white Charbray developed a rash and diarrhoea, went down and was euthanased by the owner. A couple of days later a black Brangus that had been having difficulty walking was found dead, and a Murray Grey started to show signs of 'stiffness'. At the end of April the vet did post-mortems on two Murray Grey heifers with moderate to marked photosensitisation. As well as ulceration on the nose, tongue and mouth, the animals had large livers and gallbladder, yellow discolouration of fatty tissue, rumens distended by fluid and partially digested grass, and discolouration of the renal cortex.

The histological findings - hepatopathy, myocardial necrosis and severe, subacute nephrosis - were highly suggestive of Lantana poisoning. Although there was abundant reasonable quality dry matter available in the paddocks, close examination of the house paddock showed that Lantana plants had been eaten.

This investigation followed a classic trajectory, starting with a myriad of diagnostic possibilities for young stock of mixed origin, increasing in clarity as the full clinical syndrome became apparent, and finishing with a diagnosis based on laboratory and field findings. It also reinforces the message that lantana poisoning is more likely in introduced stock that are unfamiliar with the plant.

This case is another in the NABS SDI case library.

Lesions on the underside of the tongue are sometimes the only signs of photosensitisation in animals with pigmented skin. This area is exposed to sunlight when they lick their nostrils.

Lantana camara toxicity

A toxic dose for a 500 kg cow varies from about 5 to 20 kg of fresh leaf (one per cent or more of an animal's body weight), depending on the toxin content of the lantana eaten.

All lantana should be treated as poisonous to stock. Red flowered varieties are thought to be the most toxic but some white and pink flowered varieties can also be highly toxic.

Lantana invading pasture

(Source: weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au)

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Happy to help

Let me know anything you'd like covered here or on the website

Kevin Bell, NABS Vet Adviser

Contact at: nabsvetadviser@gmail.com / 0427 433 244

or visit www.nabsnet.com.au

Newsletter sent on Kevin's behalf from the team at Harris Park Group