



Can an equine case be an SDI?

You are all still pretty busy it seems, but in good spirits, at least when talking to me! Soon there'll be more time away from the back end of cows.... Do ring for a chat when in range on the road.

An SDI featured this newsletter is an equine case presenting with fever and nervous signs. The SDI process is for disease events in livestock (cattle, sheep, goats and pigs), and other species... if it is an approved case.

This one was approved because of the possibility of a notifiable or zoonotic disease. Don't hesitate to check with me or contact your government vet if you have a case with horses that you think fits the SDI bill.

We are summarising other interesting [SDIs on the web](#). And do remember to send photos - really builds up the picture of your cases.

The season is changing rapidly in my patch in the Kimberley now with the familiar heat and humidity and a bit of green pick around the buffel and burnt spinifex. Theoretically good but the change combined with lower condition score can lead to cattle problems, especially if licks are not being kept up. **Talk to your clients and get them motivated to report anything interesting.**

Cheers for now, Kev
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Stock horse with fever and nervous signs

A 7 year old mare in a mob of 80 stock horses in WA was very lethargic and showed neurological signs with head tremors, stiffness and muscle twitching. There were no respiratory signs. Another horse from the group had died with nervous signs 3 weeks earlier, but no others appeared affected when the mare was examined.

[Find out more](#)

Injecting cattle from a distance (Tristan Jubb)

A jabstick is a push-operated syringe on a pole that is great for injecting cattle that you can't or don't want to get close to. When handling facilities are limited, jabsticks can be used to sedate these animals for examination, or prior to euthanasia for autopsy, [further info](#).



Fixing samples for histopathology (BSL Qld)

Getting well fixed tissues to the lab gives the best chance of having histopath results that are useful to your disease investigation. Here are some tips from BSL Qld:

Into the formalin:

- **Immerse samples in at least 10 times their volume of formalin.**
- Place the formalin in the container before adding the tissue samples.
- Gently shake the container to ensure that no tissues adhere to the container walls or other tissues, as these will not fix properly.
- You can use a single container for multiple samples from the same animal, provided there is sufficient volume of formalin.

Collecting the tissues:

- **Cut blocks of tissue that are 5–10 mm thick.** Blocks thicker than 10 mm will not be well penetrated by the formalin. Blocks thinner than 5 mm fix well but distort easily and are difficult to process.
- Cut blocks that include the lesions seen and some normal tissue, wherever possible.
- For large hollow organs such as the stomach and large intestine, cut 20 mm squares including all layers from the walls.
- For the small intestine, cut into 20 mm sections and gently flush the contents out with formalin before immersion in the fixative. Partly cut open any longer lengths of intestine to expose the mucosa before immersion.



***Not like this! Poorly fixed liver
(not enough formalin and tissue cut too thick)***





Workshops for Northern cattle producers

The first step in a significant disease investigation is being contacted by the producer. For this to occur they need to know when and who to call – to see the value of investigations and the importance of surveillance, and to know the government and private vets in their patch.

And having producers able to collect good quality samples before the vet arrives, or from subsequent cases, may really increase the likelihood of a positive diagnosis.

Workshops for producers on investigating cattle disease and PM techniques are being run to develop these connections and skills.

Encourage your producer clients to attend the workshops, have PM kits on hand and connect with veterinary advice as soon as they see a significant disease event.

More info about these producer workshops [here](#).

For the network

The **next Masterclass** will be held in Darwin on 22-23 February 2019. NABSnet practices will be able to send 2 vets as part of their package - [more info](#)

Events coming up: Workshop on Emergency Animal Disease management for small, mixed and large animal veterinarians practising in North Queensland, at JCU Townsville 3-4 November [info here](#)

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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