

## **Preventing liver fluke with interstate movement of horses**

Horses that are taken from Western Australia to an eastern state for competition, exhibition or for other reasons, are at risk of becoming infected with liver fluke.

The Department of Agriculture advises that all horses that come into Western Australia from areas of other States where liver fluke may be found, must be tested and treated to prevent introduction of liver fluke to Western Australia.

However, the Department advises there are important differences in the testing and treating requirements for horses that are newly introduced to Western Australia, as compared to those that go to an eastern state and are returned to Western Australia in a short period of time.

Garry Hodgen, Inspector in Charge (Stock), said where horses were out of Western Australia for less than 49 days it was not necessary to treat and test them before they were brought back into the State.

Instead, the liver fluke 'treat and test' strategy for horses that exit Western Australia and return to Western Australia after an absence of 49 days or less, and that have grazed pasture or eaten fodder grown in another State, requires:

- a treatment with triclabendazole 35 to 49 days after the date of re-entering Western Australia followed by;
- a Fluke Egg Sedimentation Test on a faecal sample collected 90 to 100 days after returning.

The triclabendazole drench may be administered orally or by stomach tube at the dose rate of 12mg/kg (e.g. Fasinex 240®, 5mls/100kg body-weight).

"The owner of the horse will usually engage a veterinarian to administer the treatment. However, those in remote locations where there are no vets available, may be allowed to treat their own horses under the supervision of a government stock inspector," said Mr Hodgen.

"The faecal sample is to be collected by a veterinarian or stock inspector for submission to an approved laboratory for testing. The costs of treatment and testing are the responsibility of the horse owner unless other arrangements have been made."

Mr Hodgen said the timing of the treatment and collection of the sample for testing are crucial to the effectiveness of the strategy.

"Treatments and tests are costly and if done outside the times directed and detailed on the Quarantine Surveillance Notice, are a waste of time and money," he said.

Owners of horses returning to Western Australia, or entering for the first time, are required to have the entry certificate, "Interstate Entry of Equines into Western Australia" (code number AD 1061).

Mr Hodgen said treatment and testing of horses returning to Western Australia within 49 days of departure could be avoided if the horse did not graze or eat feed of eastern state origin and was fed only processed feed or feed from Western Australia. The

certificate, "Declaration of Re-entry of Stock", is available from the Department of Agriculture for those who are able to meet the conditions.

For further information contact Jo Peters, Northam on 08 9690 2000 or 0428 921 699, Garry Hodgen, South Perth on 08 9368 3370, or Bill Gorrie, Kalgoorlie 08 9088 6033 or 0417 957 234.

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