

Horse owners given opportunity to voice Hendra virus concerns

Biosecurity Queensland and Biosecurity New South Wales have developed a Hendra virus survey aimed at understanding the practices of horse owners.

Queensland Chief Veterinary Officer, Dr Rick Symons said the 'Horse Owner Survey on Hendra Virus' is aimed at providing an insight into the practices, attitudes and opinions of horse owners.

"The survey focuses on understanding husbandry practices, general management of horses, and feeding practices which may be related to Hendra virus transmission.

"Information on the location, layout, design and vegetation of properties will help provide an insight into possible interactions between flying foxes and horses."

Dr Symons said the survey would also focus on the attitudes, opinions and horse owners' understanding of Hendra virus.

"We want to know how people access information provided by state governments and what we can do to be more effective in communicating to horse owners," he said.

"It is unknown whether horse owners have a good understanding of Hendra virus and we want to gauge if there is an information gap based on demographic features."

Dr Symons said information obtained from the survey would be of value to those working in human health planning, and will help improve responses to any similar threats in the future.

"Our aim is to use this information to allow Biosecurity and other government agencies to tailor resources to reduce the risk of future Hendra virus incidents," he said.

The survey can be completed online at:

https://www.research.net/s/Horse_Owner_Survey_on_Hendra_virus

Horse owners can also access the survey via the Biosecurity Queensland website at www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au or the Biosecurity New South Wales website at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete and is open to horse owners in Queensland and New South Wales.

The survey closes on 28 February 2012.