Equine Infectious Anaemia – July 2017

Background

Equine Infectious Anaemia (EIA), also known as Swamp Fever, is a viral disease of horses and other Equidae. The disease occurs worldwide, including parts of mainland Europe. The EIA virus is transmitted between horses by transfer of virus-infected blood or blood products. The most important mode of disease spread is by insect vectors (horse flies, stable flies and mosquitoes). Additionally, EIA can also be transmitted by administration of infected blood products, syringes, and needles, surgical and dental equipment. EIA does not affect humans.

Current Status in Europe

Since June 2017 there have been a number of outbreaks of EIA in Germany and Holland. So far all the horses testing positive in the current outbreak in German and Dutch cases are linked to the import from Argentina of a consignment of polo ponies and a polo tournament held in Hamburg. In all cases, the affected horses have been euthanised and restrictions put in place on affected premises.

Also during 2017 there have been other (unrelated) European cases of EIA reported in countries including: Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Romania and Switzerland.

EIA Clinical Signs

The disease may take an acute, chronic or sub-clinical form, and clinical signs can be extremely variable.

Acute clinical signs: dullness, depression, fever, increased heart and respiratory rate, bleeding, bloody diarrhoea, poor performance, in-coordination, weight loss, skin swelling and jaundice.

Chronic clinical signs: dullness, depression, recurring fever episodes, anaemia, weakness and weight loss.

Disease Notification

Equine Infectious Anaemia is a notifiable disease. If you suspect any animals may be affected you must contact your regular veterinarian or notify the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine immediately by contacting your local Regional Veterinary Office or by calling 1850 200 456.