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People can sign up for these updates and access previous editions at [www.agriculture.nsw.gov.au/info/hendra](http://www.agriculture.nsw.gov.au/info/hendra)

### Current situation

There are currently no properties quarantined in NSW, with all previously infected properties declared safe by NSW authorities.

### Green Light for Vital Hendra Research Projects

NSW Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson has today announced new research projects aimed at protecting our equine industry from the deadly Hendra virus.

“\$5 million has been allocated to five research projects looking at vital issues such as how the virus is transmitted, vaccine development, flying fox dispersal, transmission in dogs and testing and risk management strategies,” Katrina Hodgkinson said.

“The research projects are being coordinated through the cross-border Hendra taskforce, which includes Chief Veterinary Officers, Chief Health Officers and Chief scientists from both states as well as CSIRO representatives.

“The NSW Government’s world-renowned Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute will lead a \$900,000 study looking at virology issues, including new state-of-the-art testing techniques and how various animals, including horses, dogs and cats, contract and respond to the deadly disease.

“The project will provide vital intelligence to both Government

### Stay alert!

NSW DPI advises horse owners to take precautions in areas with flying foxes - to reduce the risk of their horses becoming infected:

- Place feed and water containers under cover.
- Do not place feed and water under trees, especially any trees with fruit.
- Do not use feed that could attract flying foxes, such as apples, carrots, or molasses.
- Remove horses from paddocks where fruiting or flowering trees have temporarily attracted flying foxes.
- If it is not possible to remove the horse from the paddock, tape off the area under the tree.

authorities and private veterinarians on the risk factors that lead to transmission and how we can take steps to prevent infection of other horses, and critically, humans.

“An epidemiologist from NSW’s Wollongbar Primary Industries Institute is also closely involved in research projects looking at the transmission of the virus from flying foxes to horses and the impact flying fox dispersal has on virus infection levels.

“The research teams bring together some of the world’s leading thinkers in epidemiology, virology, veterinary science, and zoonotic and human health fields.

Katrina Hodgkinson said this year has been the largest outbreak of Hendra the two States have seen.

“In NSW the virus claimed ten horse deaths at eight properties, all on the NSW North Coast,” Katrina Hodgkinson said.

“These critical new research projects aim to get to the bottom of this year’s spike and look at new ways to reduce further cases in the future and ultimately minimise the risk of human infection.

“Hendra is a deadly virus and the NSW Government is taking every precaution possible to protect the health of our community and the State’s valuable horse industries.

“From one end of the State to the other, NSW Department of Primary Industries and the Livestock Health and Pest Authorities are working with landholders and private veterinarians to undertake extensive surveillance of suspect cases.

“NSW authorities have assessed some 220 properties since we identified the first case at Wollongbar back in June 2011.”

## **HENDRA RESEARCH PROJECTS**

### *Transmission and impacts of Hendra virus in dogs*

Lead Agency: CSIRO Australian Animal Health Laboratory

This project will assess the potential for dogs to transmit Hendra virus to people or other animals and provide a basis to inform policy for managing dogs exposed to Hendra virus.

*Assessing the risks posed by Hendra virus antibody positive animals*

Lead agency: NSW DPI's Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute

This project consists of a number of studies that will address issues associated with the detection of antibodies in animals exposed to Hendra virus.

*Flying fox dispersal and Hendra virus risk*

Lead agency: Biosecurity Queensland, Queensland Centre for Emerging Infectious Diseases

The study will provide scientific evidence about whether the dispersal of flying fox colonies affects stress levels or Hendra virus excretion

*Hendra virus infection and transmission dynamics*

Lead agency: Biosecurity Queensland, Queensland Centre for Emerging Infectious Diseases

The project aims to identify the key factors associated with the transmission of Hendra virus from flying foxes to horses. These studies will improve our understanding of how key ecological factors are related to the risk of Hendra virus transmission.

*Refining development of the equine Hendra vaccine*

Lead Agency: CSIRO Australian Animal Health Laboratory

This project will demonstrate the effectiveness of the final formulation of the Hendra virus vaccine and ensure the most rapid availability of a vaccine for horses.

## **Grants available for Hendra Research**

On top of the five commissioned projects, submissions are now being sought for additional Hendra research projects.

Scientists, academics and universities within Australia and overseas are invited to apply for funding from the Hendra Virus Open Funding Program.

The research projects should align to one of three priorities:

1. Prediction of high risk periods for Hendra Virus transmission from

flying foxes to horses

2. Strategies to prevent transmission of Hendra Virus
3. Detection and response to incidents

Details of how to apply for the research grants can be found at [www.rirdc.gov.au](http://www.rirdc.gov.au) and applications close on 31 October 2011.