



# Reporting an emergency animal disease

## What is an emergency animal disease (EAD)?

An emergency animal disease (EAD) is defined nationally as a disease that meets one or more of the following criteria:

- It is a known disease that does not normally occur in Australia, and it is in the national interest for the country to be free from that disease.
- It is a variation of a disease that does occur normally in Australia, and if established here, it would have a national impact.
- It is a serious infectious disease of unknown or uncertain cause, which may, on the evidence available at the time, be an entirely new disease or one not included in the national list of emergency diseases.
- It is a disease that does occur sporadically in Australia but is occurring in such a severe outbreak form that an emergency response is required to ensure that there is neither a large-scale epidemic of national significance, nor serious loss of market access.

In short, an EAD is likely to have a significant effect on animals, potentially resulting in deaths, production loss, and in some cases, impacts on human health and the environment.

An outbreak of a serious EAD can be disastrous for animal owners and managers, causing significant personal stress and anguish as well as financial hardship. The livestock industries can lose sales opportunities both domestically and internationally in the wake of damaged reputation for our produce, and the broader Australian economy could lose billions in trade and employment.

## How do I know what an EAD looks like?

If you observe animals looking unwell and you suspect a pest or disease outbreak or have seen something unusual and you're not sure whether it's an EAD or not – report it. Small signs may be an early indication that something's wrong.

**Early intervention is critical in a pest or disease outbreak.**

Mass mortalities of the same type of animals (domesticated or wild, terrestrial, or aquatic) can also be an indicator that disease has entered the population. These events should also be reported.

Stranded, injured or neglected animals should NOT be reported as an Emergency Animal Disease. If you have concerns about animals in these situations, contact the RSPCA immediately.

## Where do I report an EAD?

The Emergency Animal Disease Hotline is a national 24 hours a day, 7 days a week service designed to receive reports of animal disease and direct those reports to the appropriate authorities so they can be investigated further.

## What information is useful when making a report to the EAD hotline?

- The type of animal/s that appears to be sick.
- A description of the symptoms observed in the animal and their level of severity i.e. was the animal 'a bit sick', 'quite sick', 'very sick' or 'dead'?
- **Where** you observed the affected animal/s. This is VERY important.
- Your contact details so a Government veterinarian can call you back.
- If you are asked to leave a message, PLEASE DO!

