



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development

GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



WA livestock disease outlook

Veterinarian edition | May 2019

Recent livestock disease cases in WA

African swine fever excluded as the cause of disease in a pig herd

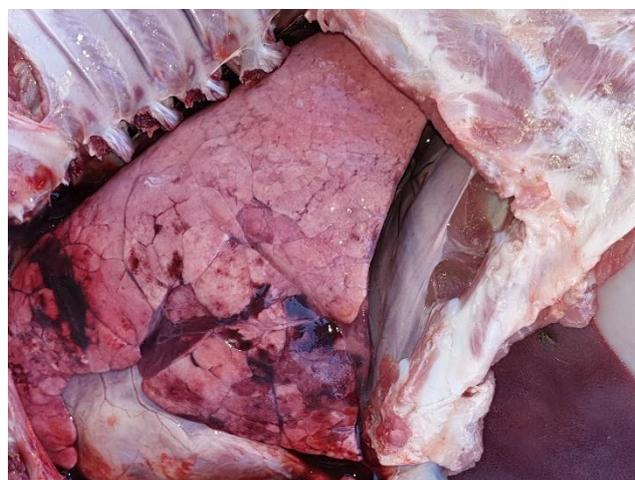


Image 1 (left): Deceased pig with purple discoloration of the face. Image 2: Multifocal pulmonary haemorrhages.

- In May, a pig producer reported respiratory disease and deaths in 11-week-old pigs to their private veterinarian. This vet was unavailable to attend the property, but recognising the signs as potentially being consistent with a reportable disease, immediately contacted a [DPIRD Field Veterinary Officer \(FVO\)](#). Only one batch of pigs on the property was affected.
- The first signs of disease had been seen two days prior, with a significant increase in mortalities and animals showing lethargy, inappetence, reduced water intake and respiratory difficulties. The producer reported purple discoloration of the ventrum, face and ears in some sick pigs (see Image 1), and a bloody nasal/oral discharge in some of the dead pigs.
- The [DPIRD FVO](#) conducted an on-farm investigation and post-mortem of eight pigs. On post-mortem, pigs were noted to be in good body condition with evidence of pleurisy and pneumonia, including haemorrhagic, friable lungs (see Image 2).
- Fresh and fixed tissues, blood samples and swabs were submitted to the [DPIRD laboratory](#) with differential diagnoses including *Actinobacillus pleuropneumoniae* pleuropneumonia (APP), pasteurellosis, mycoplasmosis, Glasser's disease and salmonellosis.
- As the clinical signs may have indicated exotic diseases such as [African swine fever \(ASF\)](#) or [classical swine fever \(CSF\)](#), exclusion testing (PCR and serology) was conducted, which was negative.
- Histopathology showed severe bronchopneumonia and pleuritis with lymphadenitis.

- Bacterial culture was positive for APP from lung and pericardial swabs, resulting in a diagnosis of APP pneumonia.
- [ASF](#) is currently spreading across Europe and Asia, and poses a major threat to pig-producing countries that are free of the disease, such as Australia.
- Always report any unusual deaths or suspicion of [ASF](#) to a [DPIRD field vet](#) or the Emergency Animal Disease hotline on **1800 675 888**. Early detection = faster eradication. Please share this message with your networks who have contact with domestic or wild pigs, including veterinary colleagues, the pork industry and hunting groups.

Private vet investigates neurological signs in dairy heifers in the South-West

- In a herd of 800 dairy heifers, one died and two were unwell with progressive ataxia, circling and recumbency. The heifers had recently calved, and were being fed silage.
- A drooping eyelid and flaccid lips had been noted prior to death on one side of the face of an affected animal. A private vet attended and during a post-mortem examination found copious brown-tinged cerebrospinal and subdural fluid. A full sample set was submitted to the [DPIRD laboratory](#), with a provisional diagnosis of listeriosis.
- Histopathological examination revealed a chronic meningoencephalitis and ventriculitis. Bacterial cultures of the cerebrospinal fluid and spinal cord isolated growths of *Trueperella pyogenes* and haemolytic *E. coli*.
- There were no typical listeriosis lesions (microabscessation in the hindbrain), and specific bacterial cultures for *Listeria* were negative.
- The cow was diagnosed with meningoencephalitis, likely due to the mixed bacterial infection.
- [Reportable diseases](#) including [transmissible spongiform encephalopathy](#) and [lead toxicity](#) were excluded as the cause of disease and deaths in this case.
- The vet received a subsidy to conduct the on-farm investigation and post-mortem under the [Significant Disease Investigation \(SDI\) program](#). This subsidy is available for approved significant disease incidents in livestock and wildlife. See the [SDI webpage](#) for details.

In early winter, watch for these livestock diseases

Disease, typical history and signs	Key samples
<p>Arthritis in lambs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae</i> is the most common cause of bacterial arthritis in lambs in WA. • Lambs are most susceptible to infection soon after birth (via the umbilicus), at marking, mulesing and shearing. Any break or wetting/softening of the skin can allow entry of bacteria and development of arthritis. • Differentials include endemics such as footrot, foot abscesses, laminitis from grain overload, scabby mouth extending to the lower legs, rickets, white muscle disease and exotic diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease, bluetongue. • Read more on arthritis in sheep 	<p>Post-mortem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swab of joint fluid/ synovium in transport media for culture • Fixed joint capsule and muscle • Fixed bone/joint sample if lesions or deformity

Grass tetany in cattle

- Susceptible cattle are generally older, highly productive cows in their first four months of lactation, grazing grass pasture.
- Signs may include twitching, convulsions, excitement, apparent aggression, stiff gait and sudden death.
- Magnesium-deficient cattle normally present with clinically consistent signs for TSE and may be suitable for the TSE exclusion subsidy. See the [TSE webpage](#) or contact your [DPIRD vet](#) for details.
- Read more on [grass tetany in beef cattle](#).

Ante-mortem:

- Lithium heparin blood sample for magnesium and calcium

Post-mortem:

- Vitreous humour
- Brain and spinal cord sections for TSE exclusion if neurological signs



Can you spot your local DPIRD field vet? DPIRD held four regional workshops in late May to update private vets about the latest in animal health surveillance. DPIRD field vets also participated in a practical workshop at Katanning Saleyards (pictured above). Thanks to Rod Bushell (second left), Katanning Saleyards manager, for his assistance. Pictured are Graham Mackereth (left), Broome; Kevin Hepworth, Bunbury; Vanessa Rushworth, South Perth; Andrew Larkins, Albany; Kristine Rayner, Katanning; Rod Thompson, Northam; Courtenay Bombara, Moora; Marion Seymour, Surveillance Manager; Anna Erickson, Narrogin. For more details, search 'Vet workshops support WA's high biosecurity status' on agric.wa.gov.au.

WA Livestock Disease Outlook highlights benefits of surveillance

Australia's ability to sell livestock and livestock products depends on evidence from our surveillance systems that we are free of livestock diseases that are reportable or affect trade. The *WA livestock disease outlook – for vets* summarises recent significant disease investigations by DPIRD vets and private vets that contribute to that surveillance evidence.

We welcome feedback. To provide comments or to [subscribe](#) to the monthly email newsletter, *WA livestock disease outlook*, email waldo@agric.wa.gov.au

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