

NSW Pig Hunter Warning - Confirmed cases of Brucellosis

By Michael Gibson | 19 July 2017

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New England hunters are being urged to heed warnings after an outbreak of the deadly disease, Brucellosis has been discovered in five separate cases, in the area.

The Land Newspaper interviewed Gunnedah veterinarian, Tina Clifton, who said the disease could also be transferred to humans, with high risks

including abortion in females, infertility in males and endocarditis. Symptoms are “flu-like”, with swollen testes another indicator.

“It is quite scary because we just don’t know enough about it and it makes it difficult because there are just so many unknowns,” she said.

The biggest concern is that pig chasers, particularly “recreational” pig chasers, may be unaware of the risks to their families if they or their dog become infected.

Symptoms in dogs included lethargy, difficulty breathing and enlarged testes in non-castrated males. The vet said while dogs could be treated, they could not be cured and it was recommended that dogs carrying Brucellosis be put down.

Ms Clifton said her “biggest concern” was that pig chasers, particularly “recreational” pig chasers, may be unaware of the risks to their families if they or their dog(s) become infected.

“I think we need to give people an idea of the risks, so if people take their dogs out pig chasing, they know potentially what they’re in for,” she said.

The vet said she didn’t know why there was a spike in cases at the moment, but prevention was a big factor in stopping the disease from spreading.

“I recommend wearing gloves pig chasing, not feeding raw pig meat to dogs, and washing down utes but not in the backyard,” she said.

What is Brucellosis

Brucellosis is a disease caused by infection with a type of bacteria (*Brucella*). This disease is common in many parts of the world, but it is rare in Australia. *Brucella* bacteria infect a range of animals. *Brucella suis* usually infect pigs. *Brucella suis* infection is widespread in Queensland’s feral pig population and it has also been detected in the feral pig population in northern New South Wales (NSW).

image: <http://yaffa-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com/yaffadsp/images/dmlImage/SourcImage/300px-Brucella02.jpg>



Brucella suis can be transmitted to people. Feral pigs are the usual source of infection for people, particularly when there has been contact through breaks in the skin with the tissues and body fluids of an infected pig e.g. blood, urine, uterine discharges and aborted fetuses. Uncommonly, bacteria can be inhaled and cause disease, such as in laboratory workers who work with *Brucella suis* cultures. The infection is very rarely transmitted from person-to-person.

Brucellosis (*Brucella suis*) has been detected in dogs that have been pig-hunting in northern NSW, particularly around the Moree area. Infection has also been detected in dogs that have been fed raw feral pig meat.

Transmission of *Brucella suis* infection around the time of birth is suspected in two young dogs (with no known contact with feral pigs) diagnosed with brucellosis (*Brucella suis*) in NSW.

Read more at <http://www.sportingshooter.com.au/latest/nsw-pig-hunter-warning-confirmed-cases-of-brucellosis#JdmkHvckPmoD2R5S.99>