MINISTER ACTS TO DEFEND TERRITORY FROM QUEENSLAND CATTLE DISEASE

29 November 2012

A beef stud in Rockhampton, Queensland, has been infected with Bovine Johne’s Disease (BJD).

The beef stud which sells stud bulls to pastoral properties across Australia, including the Northern Territory, may have sold infected cattle into the Territory.

It is considered that the risk of the disease having been spread to the Northern Territory is very low as BJD is not a highly contagious disease and the Territory’s environmental conditions are not favourable for the survival of the disease causing bacteria.

Minister for Primary Industry, Willem Westra van Holthe, has instructed the Primary Industry Department to track all cattle moved in to the Northern Territory to establish whether any have come from the infected stud.

“We are not going to take any chances of allowing infected beasts to mix with the Territory’s well maintained cattle stock,” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

“I have instructed the Government’s biosecurity team to thoroughly examine the situation and leave no stone unturned.”

BJD is known to occur in dairy herds in south-eastern Australia, but is rarely reported in beef herds.

At this stage, there are no cases of BJD in the Territory and the Department of Primary Industry’s biosecurity team is using the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) to track cattle moved in to the Northern Territory.

“We have been in communication with our colleagues in Queensland who have already taken steps to quarantine and contain the situation,” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

“The Northern Territory Government will continue to work in partnership with industry and the Commonwealth Government to safeguard the high standards of our cattle.”

The Northern Territory has ‘BJD Protection Zone’ status and the last reported case was in 2001.

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