

Frequently Asked Questions

Post-Mortem of Late-Term Pregnancy Loss Project

What are the costs for breeders?

There are no costs for breeders to have their foetuses assessed under this project. However, breeders must ensure the foetus fulfills the criteria by contacting Hunter Equine Centre (HEC) or Scone Equine Hospital (SEH) prior to dropping it off. Please note, there is a limited number of post-mortems covered by this project.

How do I take part in this project?

It is essential for breeders to reach out to HEC on 02 5504 3820 OR SEH on 02 6545 1333. If a foetus is confirmed as eligible breeders will be provided with results free of charge.

What is the best way to pack and transport a foetus?

All foetuses must be double bagged to prevent the potential spread of EHV. The foetus must be kept cold (4 - 10 degrees Celsius) but must not be frozen. Thick bags are strongly suggested as normal rubbish bags can tear and leak. This is vital to avoid the spread of chlamydia and EHV. It's recommended when transporting to use a bin or esky with ice both beneath and above the bagged foetus.

Are all foetuses eligible?

Due to predation there can be foetuses that don't fulfill the criteria for the project. As a general guide, the foetus should have an intact thorax and most of the abdominal organs (any three of the lungs, thymus, liver or spleen). Furthermore, there needs to be a majority of the foetal membranes: at least two of the amnion (sack around the foal), the umbilical cord, or the chorioallantois (placenta).

What happens if a foetus isn't eligible?

No foetus should be dropped off without first seeking approval from the practice. If an unusable foetus is dropped off, breeders will be liable for disposal charges and all other costs related to the foetus. Breeders must follow the supplied guidelines for packing and transporting the foetus. If not eligible, breeders may be given the option to continue with the post-mortem at their own expense of approximately \$1,500.

How important is it to complete the consent form?

A completed consent form is essential for all breeders who wish to access the funding. If the clinic hasn't received a signed consent form before the arrival of the foetus, they will not start the post-mortem. A copy of this consent form is available on all participating clinic's websites.

Who has access to the results of the post-mortem?

The breeder who provides the foetus, the participating clinic and the project's lead researcher, Dr Joan Carrick, will be the only parties who see the details of a post-mortem. The results utilised in the research will not include any details of mares or farms participating. The results will be utilised on a regional scale.

Can any veterinary practice conduct a post-mortem?

This project is still in the pilot phase. There is only two veterinary practices in NSW that have had the training and been set up for the post-mortem project. The goal is for this project to expand and include more vets and regions in the coming seasons.

When can I expect to receive results?

The turnaround time for the full set of results is aimed to be approximately five working days, but the EHV PCR will be sent as soon as it's available which is expected to be within 48-72 working hours.