

4 September 2017

Gary Stephenson
Care of FYI Website

Dear Gary

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

I refer to your request of 7 August under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) for information relating to test results of RHDV samples we received on 21st June 2017.

The questions you have asked are shown in italics below, with our responses to the first two:

1. Please provide full details of test results and what the "derived field" strain is known as including its sequence / strain number.

The report prepared for Ministry of Primary Industries, plus the consensus nucleotide sequences for the same 3 samples, TGR14742_1, TGR14742_2, TGR14742_3 (from MPI investigation # W17-00699) are attached.

Please note: that personal information in the report has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act to protect the privacy of natural persons.

2. Is the derived field strain new to NZ?

No, this is not a new strain of RHDV. This is the same virus as the original RHDV1 v351 Czech strain that was released in 1997 and is now endemic in New Zealand. Like all viruses, over time RHDV undergoes minor changes to its nucleotide sequence. The virus in these samples has therefore been described as a RHDV1 v351-derived New Zealand field strain. It is not a new virus to New Zealand.

You also asked:

3. Is it known why it only affected does?

There is insufficient evidence, or information does not exist, to enable us to answer this question, therefore I am declining this part of your request in accordance with section 18(e) of the Act.

4. What work is being done to find out how far this derived strain has spread?

5. What work is being done to contain this derived strain?

Information that would enable us to answer these questions is not held by, or known to, us therefore I am declining this part of your request in accordance with section 18(g) of the Act.

6. Is it known how this derived strain occurred?

Question 6 is answered above. Please refer to the response to Question 2.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of my decision in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Gordon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and a long, sweeping underline.

Richard Gordon
Chief Executive