

4 March, 2020

## Update about COVID-19

Please note information below derived from the OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health) web site. Please refer to the full OIE Q&A page [here](#) for further information.

### Key Points:

- In December 2019, human cases of pneumonia of unknown origin were reported in China and a new coronavirus was identified as the causative agent. Since then, human cases have been reported by a number of other countries, including Australia. For up to date information on the human situation, please consult the [WHO website](#).
- The novel coronavirus has been given the scientific name SARS-CoV-2. COVID-19 refers to the disease caused by the virus.
- Current evidence suggests that the COVID-19 virus has an animal source. Genetic sequence data reveals that the COVID-19 virus is a close relative of other CoV found circulating in *Rhinolophus* bat (Horseshoe Bat) populations. There is the possibility that transmission to humans involved an intermediate host. Further work is underway to identify the source and to explain the route of transmission to humans.
- **The current spread of COVID-19 is a result of human to human transmission. To date, there is no evidence that companion animals can spread the disease.**
- On the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, The National Veterinary Services of Hong Kong reported to OIE evidence that a dog had tested positive to the COVID-19 virus following close exposure to its owners who were sick with COVID-19. The test, conducted by real time PCR, showed the presence of genetic material from the COVID-19 virus. The dog was not showing any clinical signs of the disease. (The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department of Hong Kong have [stated](#) that the dog has been quarantined and is being cared for, and will continue to be monitored and tested to determine its status.)
- **There is no evidence that dogs play a role in the spread of this human disease or that they become sick.** The OIE will continue to provide updates as new information becomes available.

We have had some member feedback about concerned clients re (i) recent reports of canine enteric coronavirus outbreaks in greyhounds in several Australian states, and (ii) the coronavirus which causes FIP. These are of course distinctly different viruses to the one causing the human disease COVID-19.

WSAVA has stated that there is currently no evidence that pets can be infected with COVID-19, nor is there evidence that pets might be a source of infection to people with Covid-19. Full [WSAVA guidance on coronavirus](#) is available on their website.

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