ABALONE VIRUS GANGLIONEURITIS (AVG)

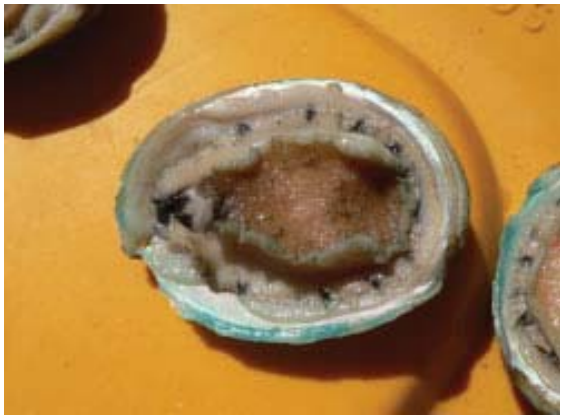
The threat: abalone virus ganglioneuritis (AVG) has the potential to severely damage New Zealand's paua industry. If established here, AVG would have a major impact on commercial, customary and recreational fishing as well as tourism and export industries associated with paua.

Abalone virus ganglioneuritis (AVG)

AVG is a herpes-like virus that's currently wiping out abalone in the Australian state of Victoria.

AVG is not currently found in New Zealand, but if it did establish here, it would be likely to severely harm New Zealand's paua stocks. Paua are part of the abalone family.

In order to prevent the transmission of the disease to New Zealand, MAFBNZ is encouraging the travelling public to take extra precautions if they're returning to New Zealand after visiting the Victorian coastline.



ABALONE INFECTED WITH AVG

Diseased abalone mouth

How can I help?

If you have been in Victoria, Australia, please ensure any gear you have used on the Victorian coast line is washed, cleaned and dried before it is brought back to New Zealand.

This includes:

- footwear (if you have been beach walking)
- swimwear
- dive gear – both wetsuits and equipment
- fishing gear
- surfing or windsuring boards
- more general clothing if you have been within an Australian aquaculture facility.

It is wise not to bring back shells, stones or beach materials from the area. If you must bring back such items, make sure they are clean and dry, and **declare them to biosecurity officers on arrival.**

Please declare you have been using the Victorian coastline to the quarantine inspectors on arrival.

WASH CLEAN AND COMPLETELY DRY WETSUITS, SWIMSUITS AND ALL MARINE EQUIPMENT BEFORE BRINGING IT TO NEW ZEALAND.

What is abalone virus ganglioneuritis (AVG)?

AVG is a herpes-like virus affecting black and green lip abalone populations in Australia. It causes inflammation of the shellfish's nervous tissue, resulting in the edges of the foot curling inwards. It can be accompanied by swelling and protrusion of the mouth and excess mucus production. Herpes viruses can remain latent in the host for long periods of time, so not observing actual clinical signs of the virus does not mean it is not present.

Active signs of the viral infection include the shellfish losing muscle control and sliding or falling off their usual locations or surfaces. In an infected environment, whole, intact dead abalone or shiny empty shells are found on beaches.

How does it spread?

AVG is passed through contact between shellfish individuals. As previously detailed, it can also be spread by equipment which has been used in infected areas.

MAFBNZ measures to prevent the arrival of AVG

MAFBNZ has a number of measures in place to greatly reduce the risk of AVG getting to New Zealand. These include border requirements called Import Health Standards (IHS) which prohibit the importation of live abalone, require shells imported to be clean and dry, and require abalone for human consumption to be shelled and cooked (which destroys AVG).

Further IHS's require any equipment associated with water (e.g. aquaculture equipment, fishing rods, surfing or diving gear, swimming togs or footwear used on the Victoria coastline in Australia) to be cleaned and dried before these items can enter New Zealand. Footwear and clothing used on any aquaculture facility in Australia should also be washed and thoroughly dried before being bought back to New Zealand.

What do I do if I suspect I have found AVG?

If you believe you have seen abalone virus ganglioneuritis (AVG) in New Zealand, please take careful note of the location, obtain a sample if you can and place it in a secure container in your freezer. Immediately call MAFBNZ's freephone **0800 80 99 66.**

IF YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE FOUND PAUA INFECTED WITH AVG, NOTE THE LOCATION AND IMMEDIATELY PHONE MAFBNZ PEST AND DISEASES HOTLINE 0800 80 99 66