

UPDATE ON RECENT EQUINE HERPES MYELOENCEPHALOPATHY (EHV-1) EXPOSURE

As you know, cases of the neurological form of herpes virus, EHV-1, have been seen in or linked to horses that attended the NCHA Western National Championships in Ogden, Utah (April 30- May 8, 2011). At this time, only horses who were at that particular show or who were directly exposed to horses that returned from that show have been tested positive. There have been NO cases reported in any other horse population to date.

There will probably be more horses that test positive for EHV-1 in the coming days but have little chance of spreading the disease if they are properly quarantined and kept at home. Our advise to horse owners and trainers is to not travel to shows or exhibitions where there will be a diverse population of horses until the incubation period for the virus is past and more testing can be done to accurately identify infected individuals and outbreak areas. If we can limit the outbreak of the disease to horses exposed in Ogden, Utah and those accidentally exposed to the horses brought back to their farms, we can minimize the duration and widespread effects of this outbreak.

There has been one positively identified case in Weatherford , TX. However, this horse is showing no symptoms of the disease, is on anti-viral medication and is quarantined securely. Therefore it is of NO threat to other horses. As of May 18, 2011 no other horses had tested positive in our area.

We will continue to update this information as we receive it. At this time, we are recommending that you not travel to horse shows or other horse gatherings for at least another week, until we can assess the extent of the exposure to this virus.

If you feel your horses are at risk of exposure, monitor their rectal temperature every 12 hours for 10-14 days. Fever can be the only warning sign before the onset of neurologic deficits. Clinical signs can include lymph node enlargement, nasal discharge, incoordination, hind leg weakness, recumbency, paralysis, lethargy, urinary incontinence(dribbling), decreased tail control and/or head tilt.

In addition to transmission by nose to nose contact, the disease can be spread through contamination on buckets, hose nozzles, grooming equipment and stall walls. It can also be carried on your clothes and/or hands. The estimated length of time the virus can live outside of the horse is 7-14 days. It is easily killed with disinfectants, therefore good husbandry such as daily cleaning of buckets and grooming equipment and washing hands can greatly reduce the spread of the disease. We recommend that you do not share bridles and saddles, pads or leg supports, etc between horses. **THIS VIRUS IS NOT CONTAGIOUS TO HUMANS.**

Prevention, unfortunately, is not 100% effective with vaccination. There are many forms of the virus and no current vaccine protects against the neurologic form. Boosting well or recently vaccinated horses is probably not helpful, however we are recommending boosting horses that have not been vaccinated within the last 60 days. We also recommend that if you must travel to a show at this time, that you vaccinate 14 or more days prior to travel as it may help limit the spread or severity of the disease. We also suggest you stable your horses together with no nose to nose contact with

unfamiliar horses. Also no sharing of water buckets or troughs and strict avoidance of horses that exhibit upper respiratory symptoms such as sneezing, runny nose or coughing.

You might also want to administer immune system stimulants before traveling. You are welcome to contact us for more information about this.

Horses showing signs of EHV should be confined and treated at their own farm. Veterinary care should be provided there whenever possible to minimize or eliminate the movement of the infected horse. Treatment and prognosis is dependent on the type and severity of the symptoms, particularly the neurologic signs. Vaccination and some medications after infection are not only ineffective but can be detrimental. If your horse is showing any clinical signs or has a fever (101.5 or higher), isolate him/her from others as well as you can and call your veterinarian right away. Early diagnosis and treatment improve the prognosis.

IMPORTANT NOTES

1. At this time we recommend to owners and trainers that traveling be avoided.
2. Booster all horses that have to travel at least 14 days prior and consider immune system stimulants
3. Take rectal temperature every 12 hours in exposed horses.
4. Do not share equipment and disinfect daily.
5. Wash hands and use hand sanitizers between horses.
6. Prevent nose to nose contact.
7. Isolate horse with fever or other signs and call veterinarian.
8. Test horses who attended Ogden show if your veterinarian deems necessary .
9. The sooner treatment is started the better the prognosis.
10. Do not booster vaccines or give any medication without consulting your veterinarian as some medications may be detrimental to affected horses.
11. Before traveling check with your state and the destination state for travel restrictions if any.