



Horses Infected with EHV-1 in Florida

Outbreak of Equine Herpesvirus has resulted in the deaths of several horses.

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The Florida Division of Animal Industry is continuing an investigation into the outbreak of Equine Rhinopneumonitis, also called Equine Herpesvirus or EHV-1.

There are ten quarantined premises, seven in the Wellington area, one in Ocala, Florida, one in Jupiter, Florida, and one in Indiantown, Florida. Eight premises with confirmed cases are under state quarantine and two premises with suspect neurologic cases are under state quarantine.

EHV-1 is a virus that can be carried by horses that shows no outward clinical signs; once infected, animals are carriers for the rest of their lives. An EHV carrier may show neurological signs such as incoordination (specifically in the hind end), lower-leg swelling, dribbling of urine and failure to pass manure. The virus, which can be spread up to 35 feet via nasal discharge, is almost always deadly.

Thought to be brought to Florida by a shipment of horses from Europe that were quarantined at the Newburg, N.Y., USDA-quarantine facility on Nov. 29, the outbreak has had massive ramifications. Nine cases of Equine Herpes Virus – type 1 (EHV-1) have been confirmed with laboratory testing from horses, seven in the Wellington area, one in Ocala, Florida and one in Indiantown, Florida. Five deaths have been attributed to this disease, although only two of those cases could be confirmed by laboratory tests.

The disease outbreak caused the Winter Equestrian Festival to cancel the AGA National Championships and forced at least two barns to undergo quarantine. Veterinarians and equine facilities are on the alert in all affected areas.

At this time there are no restrictions on interstate travel of equines, but horse owners in questionable areas are encouraged to implement the following protective measures: Take temperature of horse twice daily and maintain a log Limit number of people exposed to animals Utilize foot baths Wash hands after handling each horse Minimize shared equipment

Owners with sick horses should contact their private veterinarian to examine and treat their horses. Veterinarians suspecting EHV-1 with neurologic signs are advised to contact state officials and follow protocols for collecting and submitting appropriate samples for laboratory diagnosis

-- HF editors