

Veterinary Update

Animal Health and Welfare Branch/Office of the Chief Veterinarian for
Ontario

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Biosecurity Update

Oct 28, 2011

Suspected cases of Neurotropic Equine Herpes Virus-1 in Northern Ontario.

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs is aware of suspected cases of Neurotropic Equine Herpes Virus-1 (nEHV-1) in Northern Ontario. Three horses tested positive for EHV-1 and experienced severe neurological signs, however typing to confirm the nEHV-1 strain was not completed. On a second farm, two horses with respiratory signs only, tested positive for EHV-1. No further typing of the strain was completed. Equine Herpes Virus is not a federally Reportable Disease. Horses exposed to the sick horses on the second farm traveled to a horse event in Brandon, Manitoba on the Thanksgiving weekend.

This advisory is to raise awareness of the situation and increase vigilance for cases of nEHV-1 in Ontario. It is important that a veterinarian assess suspect cases of EHV-1 as other serious diseases can affect the nervous system in horses.

EHV-1 infection in horses can cause respiratory disease, abortion in mares, neonatal foal death, and/or neurological disease. This particular outbreak/strain seems to present more cases with neurological signs.

Horses that may have been in contact, directly or indirectly, with horses that attended the event in Brandon should be isolated and monitored for signs of respiratory or neurologic illness. Because infected horses may show no clinical signs but still shed the virus, the temperature of suspect animals should be monitored twice daily for 14 -21 days post exposure and any abnormalities discussed with a veterinarian.

EHV is easily spread by sharing contaminated equipment, contact with a carrier animal or the clothing, hands or equipment of visitors to farms who recently had contact with an infected horse. All horse owners should be reminded to practise vaccination and other appropriate biosecurity protocols and procedures for horses and equipment coming on and off the farm, particularly if traveling to shows or events. These preventive steps can be discussed with your veterinarian.

The resources listed below contain excellent information on basic biosecurity practices and infection control.

Equine Herpes Virus is a good opportunity to remind your clients that the best disease control is disease prevention.

RESOURCES

OMAFRA

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/horses/facts/prev-disease-spread.htm>

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/horses/health.html>

EQUINE GUELPH

<http://www.equidblog.com>

http://www.equineguelph.ca/education/equiplanner_guidelines_strangles.php

http://www.equineguelph.ca/pdf/facts/vacc_guidelines_print_FINAL.pdf

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF EQUINE PRACTITIONERS

http://www.aaep.org/EHV_resourcesowner.htm

American Plant and Health Inspection Service

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/equine/ehv/>

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