

EHV-1, Neurological Form

The Office of the State Veterinarian is issuing notification that horses attending the National Cutting Horse Association's Western National Championships in Ogden, Utah between April 30 – May 8, 2011 may have been exposed to the severe neurologic form of Equine Herpes Virus (EHV-1). Horses that have been stabled with horses that attended the event in Ogden, Utah may also be exposed. Confirmed and suspected cases have been identified in several western states.

Currently, there are 2 suspected cases in New Mexico; one case in the Albuquerque area and one case in the Hobbs area. All known horses that attended the event in Ogden, Utah are under a voluntary quarantine. At this time, we have not identified the location of all potentially exposed horses as reports are still being received.

Owners of horses that attended the event in Ogden, Utah have been urged to contact their veterinarian, isolate their horse(s), monitor their horse(s) for clinical signs of EHV-1 and implement biosecurity measures immediately. It is recommended that owners take temperatures of their horses twice daily as horses often demonstrate an increase in temperature of 102°F or above prior to manifestation of clinical signs.

The Office of the State Veterinarian is recommending:

- 1) Rescheduling of all major equine events (gatherings of large numbers of horses) for at least the next 7 - 10 days.**
- 2) The only way to prevent the spread of EHV-1 is to stop the movement and commingling of horses.**
- 3) Horse owners, who suspect their horse may have been exposed to EHV-1, should contact their veterinarian immediately.**
- 4) The neurological form of EHV-1 is a reportable disease in New Mexico; hence suspect horses should be reported to the New Mexico Livestock Board straight away.**

The EHV-1 virus is transmitted by various means, including aerosol, horse to horse contact, contact with nasal secretions from any surface. People can facilitate the spread of the virus via fomites (contaminated hands, clothing, shoes, vehicles and equipment). The EHV-1 virus can remain viable in the environment for several days. The EHV-1 organism can spread rapidly and the neurological form may reach high rates of morbidity and mortality. Equine owners, trainers and veterinarians should institute a "no movement" policy for horses for their premises. No new horses moving in and no horses moving out for at least 28 days after the last case of EHV-1 is identified.

The incubation period averages 1 – 6 days, but may be prolonged to 14 days. Horses with severe clinical signs of the neurological form EHV-1 have large viral loads in their blood and nasal secretions; it is possible to shed virus for up to 28 days.

Clinical signs include: nasal discharge, incoordination, hind-limb weakness, ataxia, recumbency, lethargy, urine dribbling and diminished tail tone. These clinical signs may be accompanied by a bi-phasic fever.