

media release

Colorado Department of Agriculture
www.colorado.gov/ag

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 24, 2012

Contact:

Christi Lightcap, Communications Director, (303) 239-4190, Christi.lightcap@ag.state.co.us
State Veterinarian's Office, (303) 239-4161

UPDATE: Colorado Equine Herpes Virus

LAKEWOOD, Colo. – The Colorado Department of Agriculture is continuing to investigate and monitor horses exposed to one horse with a confirmed case of Equine Herpes Virus (EHV-1) within the state; a Douglas County premises remains under quarantine. Strict bio-security and disease prevention practices have been instituted on the quarantined premises. This quarantine may be released on approximately June 8th if there are no additional horses showing clinical signs.

Three facilities received horses from the same transport vehicle. Horses at those facilities remain free of clinical signs of EHV-1. The movement restrictions on these facilities will be released on May 22, 2012, as they have completed the 21-day observation time period.

Unlike the EHV-1 outbreak in 2011, the initial case in Colorado originated from an out-of-state stable where there have not been any other positive horses. To date, no other Colorado exposed horses have become ill with similar signs. With the exception of the initial case and contact horses' premises the State Veterinarian is not recommending movement or event restrictions.

The State Veterinarian encourages horse owners and event managers to observe basic biosecurity practices such as limiting horse-to-horse contact, separating feeding, watering and tack supplies, and eliminating shared water sources at events to minimize transmission of all infectious diseases.

EHV-1 is not transmissible to people; it can be a serious disease of horses that can cause respiratory, neurologic disease and death. The most common way for EHV-1 to spread is by direct horse-to-horse contact. The virus can also spread through the air, contaminated tack and equipment, clothing and hands.

Symptoms include fever, decreased coordination, nasal discharge, urine dribbling, loss of tail tone, hind limb weakness, leaning against a wall or fence to maintain balance, lethargy, and the inability to rise. While there is no cure, the symptoms of the disease may be treatable and owners are encouraged to talk to their veterinarian about vaccine which can offer some level of protection against EHV-1.

EHV-1 Vaccines:

- The common vaccines available for EHV-1 immunization do not protect against the neurological form of EHV-1 disease which is commonly called equine herpesvirus myeloencephalopathy (EHM). These immunizations do protect against the respiratory and abortion forms of the disease.
- The EHV-1 vaccines are thought to reduce the shedding of the virus and may decrease the amount of circulating virus in the system of infected horses; therefore, vaccinations prior to exposure may help reduce the severity of infection.
- Consult with your veterinarian to determine the best vaccination and treatment strategy for your horses in your particular situation.

Additional Resources:

- [A Guide To Understanding the Neurologic Form of EHV Infection](#)
- [USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service Resources](#)
- [American Assoc. of Equine Practitioners Fact Sheet](#)

###