

# Kansas State University Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital

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<http://www.vet.ksu.edu/depts/VHC/equine/index.htm>

## EQUINE HERPESVIRUS – May 29, 2011

- Equine herpesvirus 1 (EHV-1) is one of a large group of DNA viruses causing potentially serious disease in horses and other species. EHV-1 can cause different forms of disease - one form can cause abortion in mares and another form may cause respiratory infection and neurological symptoms. The most recent outbreaks of concern have involved the EHV-1 respiratory/neurological form of the virus.
- EHV-1 is contagious and is spread by direct horse-to-horse contact, by contaminated hands, equipment and tack, and, for a short time, through aerosolization of the virus within the environment of the stall and stable.
- Currently, there are numerous reports of equine herpesvirus myeloencephalopathy (EHM) affecting horses and farms across the U.S. and Canada. This outbreak appears related to initial cases at a cutting horse show in Ogden Utah, which was held from April 29 - May 8. Horses at that event may have been exposed to this virus and subsequently spread the infection to other horses. While the true extent of this disease outbreak is uncertain, there is clearly an elevated risk of EHM cases at this time. Control of this outbreak is critically dependent on biosecurity.
- More than 400 horses in 19 states were exposed to the virus at the Utah cutting event. In addition another, 1635 horses are at risk for secondary or tertiary exposure as reported by USDA APHIS on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011.
- The incubation period is 2-14 days with shedding possible for up to 28 days. Horses at risk for primary exposure and disease were monitored through May 22, while those at risk for secondary exposure and disease will be monitored until June 5<sup>th</sup>.
- Specific details from USDA include:

### **As of 25 May 2011, here are USDA's totals on the outbreak:**

Arizona - 2 EHV-1 and 1 EHM from direct exposure, 8 EHV-1 from secondary/tertiary exposure;

California - 9 EHV-1 and 6 EHM from direct exposure, 1 EHV-1 from secondary/tertiary exposure;

Colorado - 9 EHV-1 and 6 EHM from direct exposure, 1 EHV-1 from secondary/tertiary exposure;

Idaho - 1 EHV-1 and 3 EHM from direct exposure, 2 EHV-1 from secondary/tertiary exposure;

Nevada - 1 EHV-1 from direct exposure, 2 EHM from secondary/tertiary

exposure;

New Mexico - 2 EHV-1 and 1 EHM from direct exposure, 1 EHM from secondary/tertiary exposure;

Oregon - 4 EHV-1 and 1 EHM from direct exposure;

Utah - 1 EHV-1 and 4 EHM from direct exposure, 2 EHV-1 from secondary/tertiary exposure;

Washington - 4 EHV-1 and 3 EHM from direct exposure.

Nine horses with confirmed cases of EHV-1/EHM through direct exposure died or were euthanized, plus another 2 horses with confirmed cases contracted through secondary exposure.

Horse owners are being advised to notify veterinarians if they participated in the NCHA event or if their horse suddenly comes down with a temperature above 102 F, which typically precedes clinical signs, veterinarians say.

- Additional information can be obtained through the USDA website:  
<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/equine/ehv/>
- Additional information can be obtained through the AAEP website:  
<http://www.aaep.org/images/files/EquineHerpesvirusGuidelines051711.pdf>
- AAEP Brochure:  
[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/equine/ehv/equine\\_herpesvirus\\_brochure\\_2009.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/equine/ehv/equine_herpesvirus_brochure_2009.pdf)
- Specific information about the disease: EHV-1  
[http://www.aaep.org/ehv\\_resources.htm](http://www.aaep.org/ehv_resources.htm)
- Frequently asked questions about EHV-1:  
<http://www.aaep.org/images/files/EHMEHVFAQs051611.pdf>