

June 3rd, 2011 - Update on equine herpes nEHV-1 Conference Call

The EHV-1 situation in Alberta and Western Canada was updated and discussed on a conference call this morning. Participants of the conference call included the Chief Provincial Veterinarian, members of Alberta Veterinary Medical Association, faculty from the University of Calgary College of Veterinary Medicine and local equine practitioners. In addition, veterinarians from British Columbia and Saskatchewan were also in attendance.

To date the **reported positive cases** of neurological herpes nEHV-1 (ie. Lab testing positive to the neurological strain of the virus nEHV-1) in Alberta are as follows:

- One neurological case (now recovered) first found positive at the start of May
- Three cases positive with mild respiratory signs/fever are all now recovered
- Four PCR positive horses, showing no clinical signs
- One new neurological case (responding well to treatment) that attended cutting events in Alberta
- One of the previously suspect neurological cases in Northern Alberta that was at the cutting competition in Lloydminster (reported in last update).

To date **suspect cases** of nEHV-1 in Alberta but not tested positive are as follows:

- One previously reported case with mild neurological signs that are almost resolved. This horse has tested negative but remains under quarantine.
- The second suspect with mild neurological signs in Northern Alberta that was at the cutting competition in Lloydminster (reported in last update) remains in the suspect list.
- One new neurological suspect case from Central Alberta was euthanized due in part to complications with previous significant medical conditions. Testing is pending.
- One new neurological suspect case with mild fever from Central Alberta. Testing is pending.

The update in **Saskatchewan** from the Prairie Diagnostic Services laboratory at the Vet College in Saskatoon indicated a single confirmed case that was present at the Lloydminster cutting competition. Previously reported cases in February 2011 from this laboratory are not considered part of the current nEHV-1 outbreak.

The update in **British Columbia** from the Animal Health Centre laboratory (Ministry of Agriculture) indicated two positive nEHV-1 cases confirmed through the laboratory. These cases had either direct or indirect contact with horses that were at the Ogden, Utah cutting.

Summary of Situation in Alberta:

- Of the 9 cases that have shown clinical symptoms, one suspect horse has been euthanized because of other primary conditions. All others have recovered or are recovering.
- Cases have been confirmed in Southern Alberta, in the Calgary area, in the Edmonton area and in the Peace Country.
- Horses that are confirmed positive or are suspects are being voluntarily isolated to reduce the chance of spreading the disease.
- To date, all of the horses that have either tested positive or are suspects for nEHV-1 have been associated with the cutting horse industry. There have been no reports of the virus in any other horse population and therefore they are considered low risk.

Ongoing Recommendations:

- All horse owners have been asked to carry out normal biosecurity protocols that can be found on the AB.VMA website: [AB.VMA Equine Biosecurity](#)
- Any horse that has been in contact with high-risk horses should be monitored closely for signs of respiratory or neurological disease.
- Any horse showing signs of neurological or respiratory disease should be examined by a veterinarian and tested for the virus is considered a suspect.
- To avoid spreading nEHV-1, direct and indirect contact with sick and high-risk horses should be avoided.
- The decision to cancel competitions and shows in disciplines other than cutting should be made in partnership with their associated veterinarian to develop a risk assessment of each situation.

The next conference call is scheduled for Wednesday June 8th, 2011. If any local veterinarians would like to participate they can contact the office of the Chief Provincial Veterinarian for further information.

As always we will continue to update our information as it becomes available.