

Equine herpesvirus (EHV-1) Alert to Horse Owners

Equine Herpesvirus (EHV-1) has been traced to horses that attended the National Cutting Horse Association's Western Championships in Ogden, Utah, on April 30-May 8, 2011. There have been a few affected horses identified in several western states, including Colorado, Idaho, and California. **There were no Tennessee horses that attended the Ogden, Utah event. There have been no reported cases of EVM due to the EHV-1 virus in Tennessee. Although EHV-1 is highly contagious in horses, it poses no threat to humans.**

EHV-1 can manifest itself in horses as a neurological or respiratory disease. This particular disease incident appears with neurological symptoms and is called equine herpes virus myeloencephalopathy (EHM). Some symptoms of this particular virus include:

- Fever preceding neurologic signs
- Decreased coordination
- Urine dribbling
- Loss of tail tone
- Hind limb weakness
- Leaning against a wall or fence to maintain balance
- Lethargy
- Inability to rise

The most common way for EHV-1 to spread is by direct horse-to-horse contact. This virus is passed to uninfected horses by respiratory secretions, or through direct or indirect contact with an infected aborted fetus and fetal membranes. The virus can also be spread through contact with physical objects contaminated with infectious virus such as:

- Tack
- Wipe rags or other grooming equipment such as brushes, combs.
- Feed and water buckets
- People's hands, clothing, and boots

The air around an infected horse can also be contaminated with infectious virus.

Horse owners can stop the spread of EHV-1 by

- Stopping horse movement. Several states have canceled horse events to prevent horse exposure.
- Do not allow exposed horses to have contact with unexposed horses on the premises.
- Isolate sick horses.
- Do not share equipment among horses on the facility.
- Prevent people from spreading the virus by washing their hands and changing their clothes and footwear after working with a sick horse.

- Horse owners traveling to out of state events should isolate their horses upon return for 10-21 days.
- Horse owners should contact their veterinarian immediately for any horse showing symptoms of illness.