



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

JAMIE CLOVER ADAMS
DIRECTOR

May 1, 2015

TO: MICHIGAN HORSE OWNERS

Current EHV-1 Situation:

On April 28, MDARD released the Livingston County index farm where there were two positive horses (one was euthanized). There were also an additional two premises, one in Ionia County and one in Saginaw County, that had no EHV-1 positive horses but had had exposure to the index horse that were released from quarantine during the week of April 19th. These farms were released from quarantine because the horses at the property had not exhibited fevers or signs consistent with EHV-1 for 28 consecutive days.

There have been no new cases of EHV-1 since April 3, 2015. The number of EHV-1 cases of positive horses in Michigan has remained at four. Two positive horses mentioned above and two positive horses at a quarantined Saginaw County farm.

In an effort to assist individual horse owners whose horses were housed at the quarantined facility in Saginaw County in which two positive EHV-1 horses were confirmed, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) allowed three horses to move to isolated locations, one each to Midland, St. Clair and Genesee Counties, during the week on April 12th 2015. The horses moved are not the EHV-1 positive horses mentioned above, but may have been exposed to EHV-1 positive horses. An isolated location has no other horses on the premises or within a quarter of a mile of the premises. The three isolated locations are also under quarantine. The reason for allowing horses to move from one premises to another while remaining under quarantine, is that horses continue to have fevers at the Saginaw facility, which restarts the 28 day count for horses that have no fevers or symptoms suggestive of EHV-1. Moving a horse to an isolated location allows that horse to be potentially removed from quarantine sooner than if it had stayed at the original farm

This puts the total number of facilities under quarantine in Michigan due to EHV-1 at four. Horses at quarantined facilities are under quarantine until all horses have either had no fevers and/or clinical signs exhibited that are consistent with EHV-1 for 21 consecutive days and have subsequently tested negative for EHV-1 or have had no fevers and/or clinical signs exhibited that are consistent with EHV-1 for 28 consecutive days.

The following is a list of frequently asked questions from horse owners regarding the current EHV-1 outbreak:

1. What is EHV-1 and how is it spread?

EHV-1 is a contagious virus in horses spread either by direct contact with EHV-1 affected horses or indirect contact through people, equipment or vehicles that have been exposed to EHV-1 affected horses. EHV-1 is not a human health concern, but is of concern to horse owners, as it is easily spread from horse to horse.

2. What strain of EHV have Michigan horses had?

There are two strains of EHV-1, the original, wild-type strain (non-neuropathogenic type) and a newly emerging strain which is a mutated version of the original strain (neuropathogenic type). Two of the positive horses, one from each farm, have had additional diagnostic tests performed to discover the EHV-1 genotype. In both cases, the EHV-1 was the non-neuropathogenic genotype, and therefore is the original, wild-type strain. Most horses infected with the EHV-1 original strain will have respiratory signs and up to about 25% can still be expected to have neurological signs.

3. What is a quarantine?

A quarantine is a government issued document applying to individual animals, group of animals or specific species on a farm. A quarantine restricts animal movement on and off the farm, and does not regulate people movement on and off the farm. It can also specify how animals are to be cared for.

4. Who enforces a quarantine?

MDARD administers and enforces all animal quarantines. Quarantines are put in place to mitigate risk to Michigan horse owners. Violators of quarantines can be fined and/or jailed per the regulations and authority for quarantines found in Public Act 466, the Animal Industry Act.

5. If this is the respiratory form of EHV, why are horses being quarantined?

EHV-1 is a reportable disease in Michigan, and by law, any person that knows of or suspects the disease is required to contact MDARD. MDARD is going through the same steps as they have in the past when a case of EHV has been reported by reducing the risk of transmission through quarantine.

6. How long can EHV-1 survive in the environment and what is the best way to disinfect equipment?

EHV-1 can survive up to 7 days in normal environmental conditions, and at most, one month, if environmental conditions are perfect. Normal disinfecting procedures (i.e. bleach at a 1:30 dilution) will prove effective to eliminate EHV-1. Make sure when you are cleaning equipment and housing area that you remove organic material (dirt, manure, dust) before applying a disinfectant. Make sure you are practicing proper biosecurity and washing hands, changing clothes and boots, and not sharing equipment between horses and farms. Equipment includes items such as halters, bridles, saddles, buckets, grooming tools and even trailers.

7. Should I comingle horses that have left my farm with horses that have remained?

Horses entering the premises (new horses and horses returning from events) should be quarantined from resident horses for 21 days. This is called an isolation period.

8. Can horses test negative and still show symptoms?

Yes because the EHV-1 virus is shed intermittently and if a sample is taken when no virus is being released the test will be negative.

9. How long should I monitor my exposed horses for EHV-1?

Horses should be monitored for 28 days after the exposure to EHV-1 affected horses. Horse owners should monitor their horses by checking temperatures, twice daily. Anything greater than 101.5 is of concern. Any time a horse on your farm has a temperature greater than 101.5 you should restart your 28 day monitoring.

10. Are there state import/export regulations that require testing for EHV-1?

There are no testing requirements for import/export regarding the EHV-1 virus. You should work with your local veterinarian to obtain an interstate health certificate and your vet will determine if your horse should travel.

11. If the show was on March 7, why are we seeing new cases on new farms now?

At this time, we consider all horses that attended a March 7 event in Barry County to be at the highest risk of exposure. We know from the progression of this outbreak that a secondary transmission is occurring. In other words, horses which attended the March 7 event may have been infected, shown only minimal signs of disease (fever, possibly a runny nose) and spread the disease to another horse.

12. If my horses were exposed what is the point of vaccinating now?

Horses should be vaccinated with the EHV-1 & EHV-4 vaccine to prevent illness. Discuss with your local veterinarian your vaccine schedule and how often you need to be administering the EHV-1 & EHV-4 booster.

Where do I get more information?

For more information on EHV-1, please visit our website at www.michigan.gov/equinediseases