

May 17, 2011

To: Alberta Horse Owners

Re: Neurotropic Equine Herpes Virus -1 (nEHV-1)

A case of nEHV-1 with neurological symptoms has been confirmed in a Southern Alberta horse that recently returned from the USA. The horse is isolated and is recovering. This news has been reported on many websites and internet blogs. This bulletin will provide some facts about the disease so that horse owners are aware of the current situation.

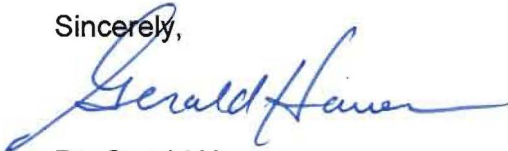
Equine Herpes Virus -1 is a contagious disease of horses that has been around for a long time. The classical form of the disease causes respiratory disease, abortions in mares and rarely neurological (brain and spinal cord) disease. In the past few years a new strain of the virus has emerged in North America that causes more severe disease. It is called neuropathogenic or neurotropic EHV-1. This virus poses no human health risk.

nEHV -1 can be spread between horses through the nasal secretions of infected horses, as well as, being transferred indirectly by people and equipment. The best practices to protect your horses from this and other infectious diseases are to:

- Follow sound biosecurity practices that prevents infectious disease spread including:
 - Hand washing in between handling individual horses
 - Not sharing equipment and feeding utensils between horses,
 - Changing your clothes and footwear after handling sick equines
 - Disinfect any environment and equipment exposed to sick equines (stalls, trailers, tack)
- Monitor your horses closely for signs of infection (fever, loss of appetite, nasal discharge, lethargy, etc.)
- Call your veterinarian if your horse is not well to determine the cause of illness.
- Prevent exposure of your horse to sick horses.
- Vaccinate your horses against common infectious diseases. While vaccinations don't specifically protect horses against nEHV-1, they do prevent other diseases and make your horse more likely to remain healthy. Speak to your veterinarian about the vaccines you should use on your horses.

People can continue to enjoy many equine activities if they apply some simple precautions for keeping their horse healthy. Horse owners are encouraged to contact their local veterinarian to discuss their concerns regarding nEHV-1 and biosecurity practices.

Sincerely,



Dr. Gerald Hauer,
Chief Provincial Veterinarian

