

Equine HEALTH REPORT

A National Institute for Animal Agriculture Publication

Summer 2005

VS Hits Idaho, Nebraska

On Sept. 26, 2005, the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa, confirmed the finding of vesicular stomatitis New Jersey (VS-NJ) virus in horses on a premises in Bear Lake County, Idaho. This is the first confirmed case of vesicular stomatitis in the State of Idaho in 2005. Idaho had no cases of vesicular stomatitis in 2004. A quarantine has been placed on the affected premises by state regulatory officials.

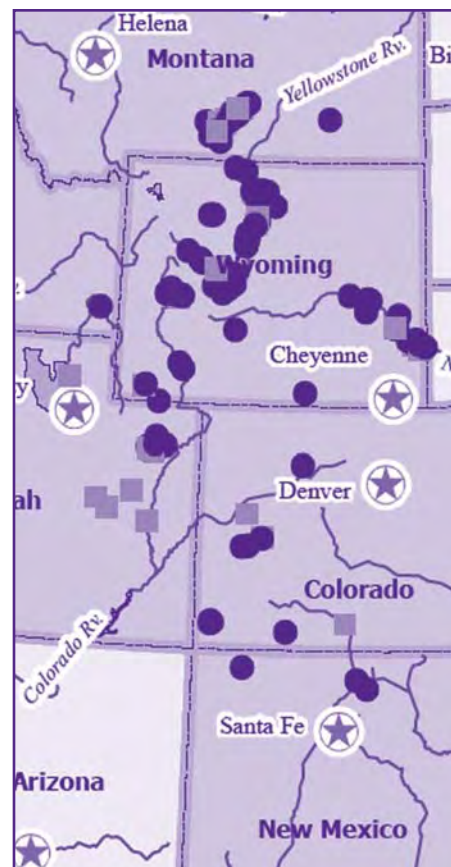
The complement fixation (CF) test results showed that two ill horses had a four-fold increase in antibodies to VS-NJ virus in paired sera collected on Sept. 16 and Sept. 23. This meets the requirement for identification of the index case of vesicular stomatitis for a newly affected state.

The premises is located in the southeastern corner of Idaho, approximately 75 miles from the nearest known vesicular stomatitis positive premises. The affected horses had not been off the premises in the last 2 to 3 months.

APHIS Veterinary Services and the Idaho Department of Agriculture will continue to monitor the situation and conduct response activities in an effort to minimize trade restrictions.

On Oct. 5, NVSL confirmed the finding of vesicular stomatitis, by virus isolation, in a horse at one premises in Scotts Bluff county, Nebraska. This case represents the first confirmation of VS in 2005 for Nebraska equine. A confirmation of VS in three cattle was confirmed a day earlier, located within the same county.

A quarantine has been placed on the affected premises by state officials. Five other horses on the premises were not showing clinical signs at the time of the foreign animal disease investigation. ●



Map of VS positive premises in the U.S. as of Oct. 2. Circles represent equine premises, while the squares represent cattle premises. Adapted from USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services map.

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VS Numbers on the Rise

Vesicular Stomatitis (VS) continues to make its way through the western U.S. As of Sept. 26, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has reported a total of 525 horses infected with VS. A total of 386 premises (including all species) have been quarantined due to the disease, while 237 of those have been released.

Wyoming has reported the highest number of cases, 169

equine cases, while quarantining a total of 111 premises since Apr. 27 of this year.

States with current premises under quarantine include Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming and most recently, Idaho and Nebraska.

In 2004, a total of 294 premises were quarantined (and released), with 405 equine cases.

51st AAEP Annual Convention to Offer Premier Education for Practitioners, Horse Owners

Equine veterinarians from across the globe will gather in Seattle, Wash., for the American Association of Equine Practitioners' (AAEP) 51st Annual Convention, Dec. 3 to 7, 2005. More than 3,300 practitioners, veterinary students and technicians attend the convention each year, making it the largest equine veterinary meeting in the world.

The 2005 scientific program fea-

tures in-depth seminars exploring lameness and imaging, equine behavior, pain management, respiratory issues and vaccination. Twenty-two "How To" presentations will cover timely topics ranging from castration to neonatal seizures, and several professional development sessions and interactive small-group discussions will complete the continuing-education offerings for attendees.

Featured speakers include C. Wayne McIlwraith, BVSc, PhD, DSc, FRCVS, one of the world's foremost authorities on arthroscopic surgery and a pioneer in gene therapy. He will deliver the Frank J. Milne State-of-the-Art Lecture, "From Arthroscopy to Gene Therapy." The State-of-the-Art Lecture is produced by the AAEP Foundation, Inc. with support from Platinum Performance, an AAEP Educational Partner. Larry Bramlage, DVM, MS, and John Madigan, DVM, again will present the popular Kester News Hour, discussing a variety of newsworthy topics of interest to both the equine veterinarian and horse enthusiast.

Other convention highlights include:

- **Horseman's Day:** Designed for horse owners and equine caregivers, Horseman's Day features veterinary experts delivering the latest news and advances in horse health. Topics this year include equine dentistry, pre-purchase exams, wound management, laminitis and the unwanted horse. Horseman's Day, sponsored by the AAEP's Educational Partners, will be held Sunday, Dec. 4 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Sheraton Seattle Hotel and Towers. The pre-registra-

tion fee through Nov. 4 is \$65; on-site registration is \$80. Lunch is included with registration. For more information or to register, visit the AAEP's horse-health Web site, www.myHorseMatters.com.

- **Veterinary Technician Program:** The American Association of Equine Veterinary Technicians, in conjunction with the AAEP, will offer a two-day education program. Sessions for veterinary technicians include field anesthesia, strangles infections, hyperbaric medicine and dentistry. The program is sponsored by Merial Ltd.

- **AAEP Foundation Celebration and Auction:** As the largest annual fundraiser for the AAEP Foundation, the Celebration promises a night of fun and philanthropy. Attendees enjoy dinner, dancing and live and silent auctions. Tickets are \$65 per person and can be purchased in advance or at the convention. The Celebration is produced with the support of Fort Dodge Animal Health, an AAEP Educational Partner.

In addition, the convention will feature a sold-out trade show with over 350 exhibitors. Several career programs for veterinary students also are planned. To learn more about the convention or to register online, visit www.aaep.org/convention.php. For assistance, please contact the AAEP office at (859) 233-0147. ●



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Industry to Establish ID Database

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced on Aug. 30 the Department of Agriculture's guiding principles for development of a public/private partnership that enables the private sector to maintain animal movement data as part of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS).

"We are eager to work closely with industry as they develop and maintain databases that contain animal movement information. After hearing the confidentiality concerns of producers, we envision a system that allows these databases to feed a single, privately held animal-tracking repository that we can access," said Johanns.

USDA's four guiding principles for the NAIS are as follows:

- The system must be able to allow tracking of animals from point of origin to processing within 48 hours without unnecessary burden to producers and other stakeholders.
- The system's architecture must be developed without unduly increasing the size and role of government.
- The system must be flexible enough to utilize existing technologies and incorporate new identification technologies as they are developed.
- Animal movement data should be maintained in a private system that can be readily accessed when necessary by state and federal animal health authorities.

USDA cited that majority of producers have given input to USDA, favoring a system that allows the animal movement data to be privately held. ●

WNV Still Impacting States

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Services is reporting fewer cases of West Nile Virus in horses for 2005, in most states. This year's total, through the end of September, is 807. The year total for 2004 was 1,341.

California again leads the country in the number of cases with 431. In 2004, California reported more than 500 cases, representing the most of any state last year. This year, California represents more than half of the country's cases. Most other states have less than 25 reported cases, excluding Idaho (88), Minnesota (85), Utah (57), Nevada (34) and Arizona (27). Texas, which reported more than 700 cases just two years ago, has only 15 to date, a significant decrease. Fifteen states have reported zero cases of WNV.

Much of the decrease may be attributed to an increase in natural immunity, as well as the effective-

ness of WNV vaccines for horses. Other factors include an increase in practices among horse owners to control mosquito populations and prevent exposure.

Vaccines are still the primary recommendation for protecting horses against WNV, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Both a killed vaccine and live vector recombinant vaccine are available to veterinarians over the counter to administer as a preventative measure.

Still, there is no treatment for WNV once a horse is infected. According to USDA, two out of three horses that contract WNV survive, with a high chance of full recovery.

For more information on West Nile Virus, log on to the Internet at www.aphis.usda.gov/vs. If you have questions on human cases of WNV, go to www.cdc.gov. ●

ID/INFO EXPO 2005 Sets Record Attendance

The National Institute for Animal Agriculture had a record attendance at its recently held ID/INFO

EXPO 2005. More than 500 industry stakeholders joined together to hear the latest on animal identification. Look for full coverage of ID/INFO EXPO 2005 in the fall



issue of *Equine Health Report*, including summaries of equine-specific presentations during the

event.

Proceedings of the event are available on the Internet at www.animalagriculture.org. ●

Mark your Calendar...

The 109th Annual U.S. Animal Health Association Meeting will be held Nov. 3-10 at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center in Hershey, Pa. For more information, log on to www.usaha.org

Horse Industry Deals with Hurricanes

When a hurricane hits, often the damage can be severe causing havoc among all individuals in its path. Horse owners have extra responsibility for animals under their care. When Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, many horse owners were left without homes – for themselves or their horses.

Numerous industry groups have sprung into action to assist horse owners dealing with this devastating disaster.

Kentucky, for example, has opened its doors to those affected by the hurricane. State Veterinarian Robert Stout established procedures to expedite horse movement into Kentucky for those distressed horse owners.

"Thousands of animals have suffered terribly as a result of

Hurricane Katrina," said Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner Richie Farmer. "We wanted to enable people to bring some of these animals into the state and still protect our own herds, and this process does that."

The requirements included a detailed description of the animals to the State Veterinarian's office, as well as time of arrival. The horses would be quarantined from other equine and livestock, and must be inspected before movement from that premises.

In Texas, following Hurricane Rita, agricultural-related agencies and associations teamed together to address livestock rescue, recovery and disposal of carcasses.

"In preparation for Hurricane Rita, hundreds of sites, such as live-

stock markets, arenas, fairgrounds, kennels, individuals and veterinarians sheltered evacuated pets and livestock," said Dr. Dee Ellis, assistant executive director with the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC). "Now we and our partnering agencies and associations are focusing on animal rescue and recovery in damaged and flooded areas.

"By teaming up, Texas can provide consistent, comprehensive assistance, whether it is damage assessment of animal-related facilities, animal rescue, carcass disposal, or treatment. All efforts are coordinated with the State Operations Center and local governments," Ellis added. Information on TAHC's efforts is provided on the Internet at www.tahc.state.tx.us. ●

AAEP Foundation Equine Disaster Relief Fund Established to Aid Hurricane Victims

The American Association of Equine Practitioners Foundation (AAEPF) announced the creation of an Equine Disaster Relief Fund to help with recovery and rebuilding efforts that are to follow from Hurricane Katrina and future disasters that may occur. These funds will only be used to benefit the welfare of horses affected by disasters.

"The AAEP and the equine veterinary community are saddened by the tragic loss of life and horrendous destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina," said Scott Palmer, VMD, AAEP president. "We are compelled to reach out, together with our members, horse owners and industry leaders, as

part of the effort to support the human and equine victims of this tragedy."

The AAEP Foundation will work with agencies and veterinary members from the region affected by these disasters to identify the needs of the equine community. Visit the Internet at www.aaep.org for more information or to download a donation form, or tax-deductible contributions can be sent to:

AAEP Foundation Equine Disaster Relief Fund
AAEP Foundation
4075 Iron Works Parkway
Lexington, KY 40511.

Veterinarians Respond...



Veterinary Medical Assistance Teams (VMAT), have been deployed to the Gulf Coast region. VMATs, established by the American Veterinary Medical Association and funded primarily by the American Veterinary Medical Foundation (AVMF), are working as part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) to care for injured animals, as well as provide advice concerning public health issues.

AHC Economic Impact Study Released

The horse industry in the U.S. contributes \$39 billion in direct economic impact to the US economy and supports 1.4 million jobs on a full-time basis, according to a new study released this summer by the American Horse Council (AHC). When indirect and induced spending are included, the industry's economic impact reaches \$102 billion. The study also estimates the horse population in this country has reached 9.2 million.



The study, conducted by Deloitte Consulting, LLC over the last year, was commissioned by the American Horse Council Foundation with major funding support from the American Quarter Horse Association, The Jockey Club, the National Thoroughbred Racing Association and Breeders' Cup Limited, Keeneland Association, American Paint Horse Association, American Association of Equine Practitioners, U.S. Trotting Association, Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association and the U.S. Equestrian Federation.

The study, titled *The Economic Impact of the Horse Industry in the United States*, is the most comprehensive research document ever compiled on the American horse industry.

The study reveals:

- An industry that is both large and economically diverse, as well as a key contributor to the overall fabric of the U.S. economy;
- Horse owners and industry suppliers, racetracks, and off-track betting operations, horse shows and other industry segments all generate discrete economic activity contributing to the vibrancy of the overall industry;
- Of the total economic impacts reported, approximately \$32.0 billion is generated from the recreational segment; \$28.8 billion from the showing segment and \$26.1 billion is generated from the racing segment.

"This study paints a portrait of an industry that operates in every corner of the country and contributes mightily to the American economy and culture," said Jay Hickey, President of the AHC. "Never before has the impact of our industry been so dramatically demonstrated."

"Millions of Americans have a personal commitment to the horse industry, from the grassroots to those who compete nationally and internationally," said David O'Connor, president of the United States Equestrian Federation and an individual Olympic gold medalist. "Some are kids riding their backyard horse for the sheer joy of it, some support their family working for an equine business, and others are breeders and competitors at the highest levels. Together they contribute billions to the economic health of our country through their shared passion for the great American icon, the horse."

Some of the key industry statistics and economic indicators

reflected in the study include:
Estimated number of horses in the U.S.:

- 9.2 million

Estimated number of horses by Activity

- Recreation, 3,906,923
- Showing, 2,718,954
- Racing, 844,531
- Other, 1,752,439

Estimated number of horses by Breed

- Quarter Horse, 3,288,203
- Thoroughbred, 1,291,807
- Other Horses, 4,642,739

Estimated number of horses in each of the 50 states.

- Texas (one million), California (700,000) and Florida (500,000) are the leading horse states.
- 45 of 50 states have at least 20,000 horses.

Number of people participating in the industry, by form of participation (e.g., owner, volunteer, etc.).

- Owners, 2 million
- Volunteers, 2 million
- By demographic breakdown (age, income, etc.).

Direct, indirect and induced economic impacts of the industry on U.S. and individual state economies.

- National contributions to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$102 billion via direct, indirect and induced spending.

Number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs produced.

- 1.4 million.

In conducting the study, Deloitte contacted 400,000 horse owners and other industry participants involved in all segments of the horse industry, including people involved in both the recreational and commercial spheres. The report is available for a fee by contacting the AHCF at www.HorseCouncil.org. ●

National Steering Committee Formed Following Unwanted Horse Summit

Following the nation's first-ever Unwanted Horse Summit in Washington, D.C., on April 19, a national steering committee has been named to perform the organizational work necessary to keep the project moving forward. In a conference call on June 8 involving all participants of the Summit, the following representatives were selected to serve on the steering committee:

- Dr. Tom Lenz, *American Association of Equine Practitioners* (chair)
- Dr. Andrew Lang, *American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals* (vice-chair)
- Remi Bellocq, *National Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association*
- Dr. Jim Cook, *American Veterinary Medical Association*
- Dr. Lydia Gray, *Hooved Animal Humane Society*
- Pennell Hopkins, *Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*
- Herb Moelis, *Thoroughbred Charities of America*
- Ward Stutz, *American Quarter Horse Association*
- Russell Williams, *U.S. Trotting Association*

The newly formed Steering Committee will operate on an interim basis until a final organizational structure is adopted. Steering Committee duties include proposing one or more organizational structures for continuation of the initiative, developing a definition of the unwanted horse and a mission statement for the initiative, and preparing an agenda for the next face-to-face meeting of the entire committee.

A second summit took place in September at the American Veterinary Medical Association headquarters in Schaumburg, Ill., involving representatives of the original 25 equine industry organizations and individuals invited to the first summit.

"The plight of our country's unwanted horses touches every facet of the horse industry. I continue to be pleased with the cooperation and work ethic of the various equine groups working to resolve

the unwanted horse issue and am confident that our efforts will bear fruit for America's horses," said Tom Lenz, DVM, chairman of the Steering Committee.

For a copy of the Unwanted Horse Summit report, visit the press room of www.aaep.org (direct link: www.aaep.org/pdfs/Unwanted_Horse_Summit_Report.pdf) or contact the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) at 859-233-0147. ●

Senate Passes Amendment to Ban Horse Meat Exports

Following the example of their colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate voted 68 to 29 in favor of an amendment to bar federal funds from being used to facilitate the slaughter of horses. The amendment was introduced by Sen. John Ensign (R-Nev.) and Sen. Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.). The House approved a companion measure on June 8, which also stops American horses from being exported for slaughter abroad. Next, it will be presented before a conference committee, and some groups anticipate that Congress will approve the initiative.

Because the amendment is attached to an annual spending bill, it will only halt horse slaughter for one fiscal year, beginning in October. The vote in both the Senate and the

House demonstrates strong public and congressional support for a permanent ban – of which American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act would provide, if passed. The vote may have serious implications on the long-term ability for the U.S. to handle unwanted horses.

The American Association of Equine Practitioners has been a voice of caution regarding horse slaughter legislation. AAEP recognizes that processing of unwanted horses is a "necessary aspect of the equine industry as it provides a humane alternative to allowing the horse to continue a life of discomfort and pain, and possibly inadequate care or abandonment," according to their position statement on transportation and processing of horses.

News Briefs News Briefs News Briefs News Briefs News Briefs

WNV DNA Vaccine Approved

A landmark approval for a DNA vaccine has set a benchmark in technology, beginning with the equine industry. Fort Dodge Animal Health recently announced the licensure of West Nile-Innovator® DNA, a novel vaccine for horses to aid in the prevention of viremia caused by the potentially deadly West Nile virus (WNV). Fort Dodge collaborated with the Centers for Disease Control on the vaccine, which is believed to be the first DNA vaccine in the world to be approved by a veterinary or human medicine regulatory agency for commercial sale.

Administered intramuscularly, West Nile-Innovator DNA causes the horse's cells to begin making proteins from the West Nile virus, which trigger a protective immune response. The vaccine is expected to be available in early 2006.

West Nile virus, a mosquito-borne disease, continues to be a significant health threat to U.S. horses—approximately one in three horses that become clinically ill with West Nile virus will die or be euthanized. Since its discovery in 1999 through Dec. 31, 2004, West Nile virus has spread rapidly across the United States with 22,602 cases of clinical West Nile virus reported in horses.

WEVA Congress Set for Morocco

The 9th International Congress of The World Equine Veterinary Association will be held in the Palais des Congres, Marrakech Morocco, Jan. 22 to 26, 2006. Hosted by the National Association of Veterinarians of Morocco, this exciting and impor-

tant event expects up to 1,000 participants and numerous commercial exhibitors from around the world. The central scientific and continuing education themes are molecular genetics, imaging diagnosis, medicine and surgery, lameness, reproduction and neonatology, disease surveillance and miscellaneous subjects.

For program and registration information, go to the Internet at www.weva2006.ma.

Russell First American Elected WVA President

Dr. Leon H. Russell Jr. became the first American elected president of the World Veterinary Association during the American Veterinary Medical Association's annual convention in July.

For the next three years, Dr. Russell, whose candidacy was endorsed by the AVMA, will head the world's oldest international professional organization comprising nearly a hundred member countries.

"I'm very honored and humbled by your vote," Dr. Russell told members of the WVA Presidents' Assembly who elected him. "I will be president to everyone, and I will hear you when you speak."

The WVA works closely with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), World Health Organization, and similar organizations on matters of food safety, food security, antimicrobial resistance, animal welfare, and zoonotic diseases.



Dr. Leon Russell

Dr. Russell of College Station, Texas, is a professor at Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine. He also has a PhD in veterinary microbiology, as well as a master's in public health.

From AVMA's Convention Daily News, July 20, 2005.

Congress Considers Veterinary Workforce Expansion

Working to address the need for well-trained first responders for agroterrorism in the U.S.,

U.S. Senator Wayne Allard (R-Colorado) introduced the Veterinary Workforce Expansion Act in the Senate in early May. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), together with the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, is urging Congress to protect the health of animals, that of the American public, and the safety of the U.S. food supply by passing and funding this legislation.

The federal government has not allocated general funding for veterinary medical education in nearly 30 years, which threatens not only the national economy but also the lives of U.S. citizens.

The bill, S. 914 resides in the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions committee. ●



Protect Your Horse from EIA

Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) is a potentially fatal disease that threatens the world's horse, donkey and mule populations. The virus that causes EIA reproduces in the white blood cells that circulate throughout the body. The immune system, via antibodies, may attack and destroy red blood cells, leading to anemia. Infected horses may die from the direct effects of the virus or from secondary infections. Despite testing and measures to eradicate the equine infectious anemia virus, EIAV, more than 500 new cases are identified each year in the U.S.

There is no cure for EIA. Although most horses show no symptoms, they remain contagious for life, endangering the health of other horses. For this reason, the United States Department of Agriculture and state animal health regulatory agencies require euthana-

sia or strict lifelong quarantine for horses testing positive for EIA.

Your horse's only protection against EIA is prevention. Good management practices can reduce the potential of infection. The following guidelines from the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) will help:

Your horse's only protection against EIA is prevention. Good management practices can reduce the potential of infection.

- Use disposable needles and syringes, one per horse, when administering vaccines and medications.
- Sterilize dental tools and other instruments before using them on another horse.
- Test all horses for EIA at least annually.
- Test horses at the time of purchase examination.
- Stable owners, horse show and event managers should require and verify current negative Coggins certificates for all horses entering the premises.
- New horses should be quarantined for 45 days and observed for any signs of illness, including elevated temperatures, before introducing them to the herd. They should be retested if exposure to EIA is suspected at a 45-day interval.
- All stable areas should be kept clean, dry and waste-free. Good pasture management techniques should also be practiced. Remove

manure and provide adequate drainage to discourage breeding sites for pests.

- Horses at greater risk, such as those in frequent contact with outside horses or who live or travel in geographic regions known for EIA outbreaks, should be tested more frequently, every 4 to 6 months.

For more information about EIA, ask your equine veterinarian for "Equine Infectious Anemia: The Only Protection if Prevention," a brochure provided by the AAEP in conjunction with Educational Partner Bayer Animal Health. Additional information can be found on the AAEP's horse health Web site, www.myHorseMatters.com.

The American Association of Equine Practitioners, headquartered in Lexington, Ky., was founded in 1954 as a non-profit organization dedicated to the health and welfare of the horse. Currently, AAEP reaches more than 5 million horse owners through its over 7,500 members worldwide and is actively involved in ethics issues, practice management, research and continuing education in the equine veterinary profession and horse industry. ●

Article provided by the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) and Bayer Animal Health.

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