



Equine Newsletter April 2014



What to Expect

Introduction

Did You Know?

Website of the Month

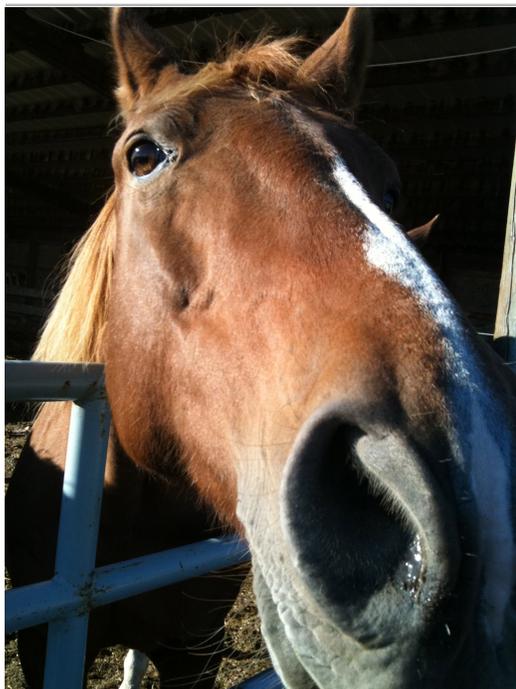
Timely Topic

Equine Herpes Virus

In riding a
horse, we
borrow freedom
—Helen Thomson

Greetings Equine Enthusiasts

I am happy to present the first of what should be a regular equine newsletter. I hope to provide information relevant to you as equine owners and enthusiasts, from a veterinarian's point of view. I am always open to ideas, suggestions or comments regarding the topics in the newsletter so feel free to send me an email if you like at Office@StoneRidgeVetServices.com. Also if you would like to be removed from the email list please send an email to the above address and put "unsubscribe" in the subject line. Thanks.



I operate Stone Ridge Veterinary Services, a mobile mixed animal practice primarily in Westlock, Thorhild and Sturgeon counties. I too am a horse enthusiast and enjoy trail riding as well as competing in local horse shows. This summer I hope to continue the training on my 3 years old saddlebred gelding. My husband and I, with our two kids, farm east of Clyde, raising cattle, chickens and turkeys. The horses serve to ensure we don't profit too much.

This newsletter is a means of communicating general information and timely topics with equine owners. If there is a topic you would like to see, please let me know.

Melissa Hittinger

Did you know?

Spring is the ideal time to vaccinate your horse. It allows the body time to mount immunity before those pesky mosquitoes arrive to spread disease and before most people are actively mingling with their horses. The core vaccines in this area are tetanus, eastern & western equine encephalitis, west nile virus, influenza and equine herpes virus 1 & 4. Strangles vaccine may be recommended in some cases. Check with your veterinarian for which program is best for your horse.

Website of the Month

Biosecurity in Alberta:

[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/cpv10708](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/cpv10708)

Biosecurity is a term you may or may not be familiar with yet, but you should. It is the practices put in place to prevent the transmission of disease. This website offers a great deal of excellent information and is very relevant to the following topic on Equine Herpes Virus. Check it out and challenge your self to implement the recommendations, your horse will thank you.



Equine Herpes Virus

Outbreaks continue in 2014

Equine herpes virus (EHV), or "rhino" as it is more commonly called, is not a new disease. Although we consider EHV-1 the abortion strain, it can be responsible for respiratory and neurological disease as well. A second strain, EHV-4 is generally considered the respiratory form. We have long since vaccinated for both of these strains and they are typically included in the "5-way" vaccine. However in recent years there has been a genetic mutation of the EHV-1 strain causing neurological issues in the horse. Signs of disease include fever, decreased

coordination and hind limb weakness, lethargy, nasal discharge, and loss of tail tone. Horses can recover but may also die if the disease is severe.

Of those that do recover, it is important to remember that "herpes is for life"; horses may no longer show signs but during periods of stress the virus may reactivate and cause shedding of the virus into the environment and clinical signs. Current available vaccines

(continued)

are not labeled nor been proven to prevent this strain. However they may offer some level of protection. Consult your veterinarian for recommendations. Your best protection is BIOSECURITY. Prevent, prevent, prevent. The American Association of Equine Practitioners has provided a list of FAQ's. Please see my website for a complete list.

<http://www.stoneridgevetservices.com/news-and-updates.html>

FAQ: Equine Herpesvirus (EHV) By AAEP

1. What is equine herpesvirus (EHV)?

EHV are viruses that are found in most horses all over the world. Almost all horses have been infected with the virus and have no serious side effects. It is unknown what causes some of the horses to develop the serious neurological forms that may be fatal.

2. EHV stands for equine herpes virus. It is a family of viruses which are named by numbers such as EHV 1, 3, 4. There are more viruses in this family, but EHV 1, 3, 4 pose the most serious health risks for

To date, nine EHV's have been

identified, worldwide. Three of these, EHV-1, EHV-3 and EHV-4, pose the most serious health risks for domesticated horses. Equine herpesvirus myeloencephalopathy (EHM) is another name for the neurologic disease associated with equine herpesvirus (EHV) infections.

- EHV-1: Can cause four manifestations of disease in horses, including neurological form, respiratory disease, abortion and neonatal death.
- EHV-3: Causes a venereal disease called coital exanthema that affects the external genitalia.
- EHV-4: Causes a nonfatal upper respiratory tract disease in foals and is uncommonly associated with abortion and rarely with neurological disease.

EHV is a common DNA virus that occurs in horse populations worldwide. The two most common strains are EHV-1, which causes abortion, respiratory disease and neurologic disease; and EHV-4, which usually causes respiratory disease only but can occasionally cause abortion and rarely neurological disease.

Respiratory disease caused by EHV is most common in weaned foals and yearlings, often in autumn and winter. Adult horses are more likely than younger ones to transmit

the virus without showing signs of infection.

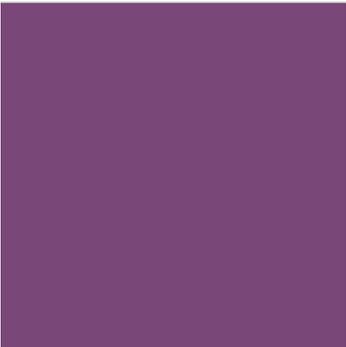
EHV-1 myeloencephalopathy (EHM) results from widespread vascular or blood vessel injury after damage to the lining of the blood vessels of the blood brain barrier. Neurologic signs result from inflammation of the blood vessels, blood clots, and death of neurologic tissue. Equine herpesvirus myeloencephalopathy (EHM) cases occur singly or can affect multiple exposed horses. They may or may not be associated with a previous or ongoing EHV-1 respiratory disease outbreak.

3. How does EHV spread?

EHV-1 is contagious and spread by direct horse-to-horse contact via the respiratory tract through nasal secretions. It is important to know that this disease can also be spread indirectly through contact with physical objects contaminated with the virus:

- Human contaminated hands or clothing
- Contaminated equipment and tack
- Contaminated trailers used for transporting horses
- Contaminated wipe rags or other grooming equipment
- Contaminated feed and water buckets. The air around the

(continued)



EHV-1 myeloencephalopathy (EHM) results from widespread vascular or blood vessel injury after damage to the lining of the blood vessels of the blood brain barrier. Neurologic signs result from inflammation of the blood vessels, blood clots, and death of neurologic tissue. Equine herpesvirus myeloencephalopathy (EHM) cases occur singly or can affect multiple exposed horses. They may or may not be associated with a previous or ongoing EHV-1 respiratory disease outbreak.

3. How does EHV spread?

EHV-1 is contagious and spread by direct horse-to-horse contact via the respiratory tract through nasal secretions. It is important to know that this disease can also be spread indirectly through contact with physical objects contaminated with the virus:

- Human contaminated hands or clothing
- Contaminated equipment and tack
- Contaminated trailers used for transporting horses
- Contaminated wipe rags or other grooming equipment
- Contaminated feed and water buckets

The air around the horse that is shedding the virus can also be contaminated with infectious virus. Although it is known that the virus can be airborne, it is difficult to establish the distance the virus can spread in this manner under typical horse management and environmental conditions.

4. How long can the virus live outside of the horse's body? This includes on clothing, footwear, walls, buckets, tack, etc...

The virus is estimated to be viable for up to 7 days in the environment under normal circumstances, but remain alive for a maximum of one month under perfect environmental conditions. Most important is to first clean equipment and horse housing areas. (Please Note: It is really important to wash and rinse where you can prior to applying disinfectants.) By cleaning first, this allows for removal of organic material, which makes the disinfectants more effective. After this cleaning, follow with a disinfection process. The virus is easily killed in the environment by most disinfectants. Conventional disinfectants and detergents are the best. It is important to perform hand hygiene (wash hands with soap and dry thoroughly or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer) when moving between horses that are grouped separately to avoid spreading pathogens that may contaminate your hands.

For the remaining FAQ's see my website:

<http://www.stoneridgevetservices.com/news-and-updates.html>

This summer there is no need to panic over the EHV issue, but do increase your awareness and implement biosecurity practices to keep your horses safe and healthy.

Happy Trails!

Melissa



Dr. Melissa Hittinger, MAg, DVM

Box 333 Clyde, AB T0G 0P0

Ph: 780-554-0663 Fax: 780-348-5540

Office@StoneRidgeVetServices.com

www.StoneRidgeVetServices.com