

2011 ARKANSAS EQUINE INFECTIOUS ANEMIA (EIA) OUTBREAK

KENTUCKY PERSPECTIVE - August 24, 2011

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The Kentucky State Veterinarians Office has during the past 24 hours learned of an outbreak of *equine infectious anemia* (EIA) occurring in Arkansas. Not unlike other recent outbreaks of equine disease, information being distributed through social media networks is a factor we must contend with. We are taking this opportunity to encourage decision makers (individuals and organizations) to base their decisions and recommendations on information received from reliable sources and which has undergone some level of verification.

Dr. Stout and I spoke with the Arkansas State Veterinarian, Dr. George Badley, earlier this morning and have confirmed a premises in Arkansas has had a number of horses found to be EIA positive. The Arkansas investigation has been ongoing for some 4 weeks now. All testing conducted thus far supports a finding that the outbreak is both isolated and contained. Additionally, the Arkansas State Veterinarian has no scientific or anecdotal evidence leading him or others involved in the investigation to believe the virus they have detected in this group of horses is any different than EIA virus routinely seen.

Our Understanding of the Arkansas Incident:

- Two horses succumbed to an illness suggestive of *equine infectious anemia* some 4 weeks ago.
- Samples were collected from all horses on the premises (~83 head) and tested for EIA
- Forty of these horses (many having resided on the premises for years) were found to be positive.
- On examination, none of the positive horses were found to be exhibiting clinical illness.
- Each of the positive animals have been euthanized and buried.
- The herd of horses is described as being 'closed' with infrequent movement off the farm.
- All horses remaining on the premises today are negative and quarantined for retest at a later date.
- There is no less than .25mi distance between these horses and non-associated equine.
- Arkansas veterinary officials are continuing the investigation by working to identify the source of infection and to definitively define if virus has spread beyond the index premises.
- Horses on adjacent premises are continuing to be tested, with no positives having been identified.
- Thus far testing has failed to suggest spread of the virus from the index premises has occurred.
- Historically, EIA positive horses are found within and around Arkansas (see historical maps www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/equine/eia/eia_distribution_maps.htm).
- Other EIA positive horses discovered this year in the region are not believed or suspected to be associated with this outbreak.
- Additional information will be forthcoming from the Arkansas Department of Agriculture.

The Kentucky Perspective is based on the information made available to us, coupled with our understanding of Equine Infectious Anemia and its transmission to susceptible equine. The Kentucky Department of Agriculture's Office of State Veterinarian is in agreement that:

- ✓ Though the number of horses found positive is significant, we recognize this Arkansas outbreak to be an isolated incident at this time.
- ✓ Kentucky's requirements for equine entering the state include horses are tested for EIA prior to entry.
- ✓ Kentucky entry requirements further require that horses be examined by a USDA accredited veterinarian and health certification issued prior to entry.
- ✓ No evidence of disease transmission occurring off the isolated premises has been discovered

Conclusion: As qualified above, we have concluded that this isolated EIA outbreak in Arkansas does not at this time increase risk to Kentucky's equine population. We believe our current requirements for horses entering Kentucky are adequate and that **additional requirements for horses entering Kentucky from Arkansas are unwarranted at this time.** We remind individuals that all new additions to a herd should be isolated for a defined period of time and that individuals traveling to or participating in equine events should routinely implement good biosecurity practices. Our office will continue to monitor the outbreak and subsequent investigation daily and will adjust strategies as deemed appropriate.