




Kentucky Department of Agriculture  
A Consumer Protection and Service Agency

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** KY's Equine Update List Serve

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**SUBJECT:** Equine Disease Monitoring Updates/Summaries

**EQUINE PIROPLASMOSIS U.S. INVESTIGATIONS**

Investigations into the occurrence of Equine Piroplasmosis, *Theileria (babesia) equi* continues and as of today a total of 457 horses have been found positive to *T.equi*. At this point in time data indicates three sources of introduction and/or associated spread. 410 positives are believed to be epidemiologically linked to an outbreak that has apparently spanned many years in Southwest Texas. These 410 positive horses have been discovered in no fewer than 16 states. The remaining 47 positives were discovered when testing to meet various regulatory testing requirements imposed for interstate movement and/or exhibition requirements. In each of these cases, epidemiological information supports the source of infection was either undetected at time of importation or iatrogenic spread (i.e. blood doping) associated with non-sanctioned quarter horse racing. In response to this prevalence of disease, the Office of the Kentucky State Veterinarian has implemented the following strategies to mitigate the identified risks:

**TEXAS EQUINE ENTERING KENTUCKY** Our entry requirements have been revised to require all Texas resident horses entering Kentucky to be accompanied with a negative test for EP (cELISA for *T.equi*) and to have an Entry Permit issued by the KY Department of Agriculture. We are continuing to allow the EP test to be valid for up to 12 months for entry and are qualifying that horses that have been in Texas less than 30 days are not considered Texas resident equine and can enter or reenter Kentucky without testing. These revised entry requirements are subject to change as the investigation(s) continues to mature.

**RED MILE QH RACING** The Red Mile Race Track in Lexington, Kentucky is scheduled to conduct a Two (2) Day Quarter Horse meet on July 16 & 17. In preparation for the meet the Kentucky State Veterinarians Office has directed that all horses (both racing and non-racing) seeking entrance onto the grounds of the Red Mile for the Quarter Horse Meet are required to be accompanied with documentation demonstrating they have been tested by cELISA during the preceding 12 months and were found negative to both *Theileria (babesia)Equi* and *Babesia Caballi*.

**EQUINE PIROPLASMOSIS cont**

**WORLD EQUESTRIAN GAMES (WEG)** Recognizing that many horses will be coming onto the grounds of the Kentucky Horse Park during the time of the Games, we are requiring that all horses coming onto the grounds during the time of the WEG be accompanied with documentation demonstrating they have been tested by cELISA during the preceding 12 months and were found negative to both *Theileria Equi* (babesia) and *Babesia Caballi*.

**CONTAGIOUS EQUINE METRITIS** Late this spring a twenty-third (23) stallion was found to be infected with the CEM causing organism *Taylorella equigenitalis*. This twenty-third stallion was epidemiologically linked to the previous outbreak that traces to a Wisconsin facility.

**WISCONSIN STALLIONS ENTERING KENTUCKY** Available information leads us to conclude that stallions with a history of having been collected or used for breeding in Wisconsin (including imported stallions clearing CEM Quarantine in WI) do pose identified risks of introducing the CEM causing organism *Taylorella equigenitalis* to Kentucky. In response to this identified risk, we will continue requiring that stallions entering Kentucky from Wisconsin for breeding purposes (live cover or collection) be cultured negative for CEM causing bacterium and enter the State with an Entry Permit issued by the KY Department of Agriculture.

**USDA CEM SURVEY INITIATIVE** The United States Department of Agriculture has undertaken and implemented a program to survey the U.S. breeding population (stallions) for the CEM causing organism *Taylorella equigenitalis*. The survey is being conducted to define if the organism has prevalence or that the U.S. stallion population is apparently free of the organism. Participation in the survey is voluntary with the USDA paying part of the associated costs. The project is scheduled to conclude in August of 2010, so those interested should contact the USDA's Kentucky Area Office at 502/848-2040 for further inquiry. Returning the U.S. to a CEM Free Status will aide in resolving many of the restrictions and/or testing requirements currently imposed on adult breeding animals being exported. The Kentucky Department of Agriculture appreciates the USDA initiative and effort to better define the CEM status of the United States equine population and encourages individuals to investigate the cost saving benefits recognized with enrollment of their stallion(s) in the USDA's CEM Survey. With the surveying scheduled to conclude in August, those with interest should contact the USDA Area Office immediately for enrollment information.

**VESICULAR STOMATITIS** Earlier this month vesicular stomatitis was confirmed as affecting horses in Arizona. Historically, vesicular stomatitis occurs sporadically in the western United States. To preserve and protect our equine and other livestock populations and markets, the Kentucky State Veterinary Office evaluates the identified risk and establishes additional entry requirements or restrictions to mitigate the identified risk. Currently we are disallowing entry of all livestock, wild or exotic animals originating within a 10mi radius of an infected or quarantined area. Animals located outside this radius, but within a defined geographic area (in this instance, Cochise County AZ) are required to be tested negative and enter with a permit and additional certification statements. We encourage individuals to monitor the requirements for entry closely by visiting our web page at [www.kyagr.com/statevet](http://www.kyagr.com/statevet).

**EQUINE VIRAL ARTERITIS** We are continuing to monitor an outbreak of equine viral arteritis that has been reported in Argentina. Information available suggests the outbreak appears to be limited or contained within the sport horse population. Initial reports indicated virus had spread into a limited number of thoroughbred mares residing on the same premises as the sport horses; six (6) mares aborted from the infection. There has been no indication that virus has spread beyond the Province of Buenos Aries. To date, extensive investigation has failed to identify the occurrence of infection in either the thoroughbred racing population or outside the Province of Buenos Aries.

**SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE STALLIONS** Our recommendation to stallion managers that are sending stallions to Argentina for the southern hemisphere season is to determine the current demonstrated level of immunity the stallion has at the conclusion of our breeding season, and if it isn't a  $\geq 1:128$  level, consideration to boosting the level of immunity by vaccination is encouraged.

**WORLD GAMES PARTICIPANTS** During the weeks leading up to the importation of horses competing at the 2010 World Games in Lexington, we will be working with the team's veterinarian and others to insure minimal opportunity of prior exposure. Upon importation from Argentina, team horses will complete a minimum seven day (7d) quarantine at the Miami Animal Import Center where they will undergo extensive veterinary assessment. Regardless of their point of origin, any imported horse presenting evidence of illness or suspicion thereof will be held in the quarantine and not permitted to travel to the Kentucky Horse Park until the concern is resolved or the horse(s) returned to their point of origin. In addition, horses that are determined fit for release and travel to the Kentucky Horse Park will, prior to entering the Park's stabling area, be inspected and assessed with fulfillment of health requirements validated. Additionally, horses will be monitored and evaluated daily during their stay at the Kentucky Horse Park.

**VENEZUELEAN EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS (VEE)** Earlier this week Government officials in Panama reported two (2) confirmed equine cases of VEE. The report cited two deceased horses to be part of a group of 21 'village horses'. Control measures include vaccination and movement restrictions. This preliminary information provides no evidence or suggestion that horses importing into Kentucky or the United States are at an elevated risk. We will continue to monitor the progression of the outbreak and associated investigation.

Contact [Rusty.ford@ky.gov](mailto:Rusty.ford@ky.gov) should you have any questions or need additional information.