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April 30, 2014

The Kansas Department of Agriculture Division of Animal Health reported that a horse in northeast Kansas has been confirmed positive with a wild type of a non-neurotropic case of Equine Herpesvirus Myeloencephathy (EHM). This horse had previously been to a large barrel racing event in Lincoln, Nebraska on April 10-13, 2014. We are contacting all Kansas contestants from the Lincoln event and your name was included as a participant.

The affected Kansas horse was euthanized and samples were sent to Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory on Friday, April 25. Preliminary tests showed lesions consistent to Equine Herpes Virus (EHV-1), a causal agent of EHM. Additional samples were then sent to the Equine Diagnostics Services in Lexington, Kentucky. Results from a PCR test were received Tuesday afternoon confirming the positive nature of the samples.

The virus is easily spread by airborne transmission, horse-to-horse contact and by contact with nasal secretions on equipment, tack, feed and other surfaces. Caregivers can spread the virus to other horses if their hands, clothing, shoes or vehicles are contaminated. Good biosecurity practices are extremely important.

Horse owners are encouraged to monitor animals carefully for signs of the disease. Symptoms may include a fever, nasal discharge, wobbly gait, hind-end weakness and dribbling of urine. Owners should also take precautionary measures when traveling or participating in equine events. If you are planning on participating in upcoming horse events across Kansas, please call ahead to event planners to confirm if the event is still taking place.

Important recommendations:

- If your horse may have been exposed:
 - Monitor its temperature twice daily and report any temperatures greater than 101.5° F to your veterinarian
 - Isolate your horse from others for 21 days past the possible exposure
- Prevent horse-to-horse contact at equine events
- EHV-1 can be spread on tack, grooming equipment, feed/water buckets, and people's hands or clothing – do not share among horses or clean properly between uses.

EHV-1 is ubiquitous in most horse populations around the world; it exists everywhere like the common cold. The most serious clinical consequences of infection are abortion and EHM.

Two resources for more information on EHV-1 and EHM are attached to this email. The USDA brochure also can be found at www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/equine/ehv/equine_herpesvirus_brochure_2009.pdf. In addition, please contact your local veterinarian with any questions about your horse's health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "William L. Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

William L. Brown DVM
Animal Health Commissioner