

**NEWS RELEASE
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**STATE VETERINARIAN ENCOURAGES HORSE OWNERS, HORSE SHOWS/EXHIBITIONS
TO FOLLOW BIOSECURITY MEASURES TO PROTECT AGAINST EHV**

LINCOLN – Due to an increased number of Equine Herpes Virus (EHV-1) cases across the nation, State Veterinarian Dr. Dennis Hughes is reminding horse owners, as well as operators of horse shows/exhibitions to remain vigilant and exercise biosecurity measures at all events where horses are co-mingled.

“No horses in Nebraska have been diagnosed with the disease at this time. I want to encourage horse owners to take precautions to help prevent this disease from affecting our horse population,” said Dr. Hughes.

According to Hughes, two horses (one from Wisconsin and one from Kansas) recently were diagnosed with EHV-1. The two horses had been at a competition held at the Lancaster Event Center in Lincoln in April. A number of states are dealing with this disease issue.

Dr. Hughes encourages all horse owners to follow biosecurity measures at their operations, including: require individuals to wash their hands before and after contact with each horse; disinfect boots and change clothes that come into contact with horses other than your own; if possible, avoid contact with other people’s horses, and isolate horses returning from shows for 2 to 3 weeks.

“Owners who will be co-mingling their horses also should consider contacting their veterinarian to discuss their horses’ current vaccination status and weigh the benefits of vaccinating their animals for EHV-1,” said Dr. Hughes.

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The disease is spread through direct or indirect contact with infected horses, so Hughes encourages operators of horse shows/exhibitions to review their biosecurity plans and minimize the opportunity for horses to have direct or indirect contact with each other. Indirect contact includes the use of shared water and feed sources, as well as the use of shared equipment.

In addition, Dr. Hughes said he recommends horse owners planning to travel to shows/exhibitions contact the venue prior to transporting their horses to inquire about entrance requirements for the event.

EHV-1 symptoms include: fever, decreased coordination, nasal discharge, urine dribbling, loss of tail tone, hind limb weakness, leaning against a wall or fence to maintain balance, lethargy and the inability to rise. While there is no cure, the symptoms of the disease may be treatable.

Additional information about EHV-1 can be viewed at www.nda.nebraska.gov/animal/equine_herpesvirus.html

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