

**The Connecticut Horse Council, Inc.**  
**EHV Alert #5 January 16<sup>th</sup> 2007**

**For Immediate Release:**

CHC would like to report that Dr. Stewart Beckett DVM, Chairman of the Board for The Connecticut Horse Council, Inc. attended a meeting convened by the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) Equine Committee which took place on January 15th. This meeting was specific to the current outbreaks of Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) in the state. Connecticut state veterinarian Dr. Mary Jane Lis DVM was also present.

The CVMA equine committee came to the following consensus at this meeting:

Currently, the risk of horses contracting EHV is probably no greater than it was earlier in the fall. The horse confirmed as positive at Fairfield Equine Associates (FEA) lived by himself for the last year, had surgery on his leg(s) and spiked a high fever. There were no other signs, but he was swabbed in light of the Florida situation and it came back positive for EHV. This horse recovered uneventfully and never exhibited any neurological signs.

The University of Connecticut (UConn) horses had an outbreak in the polo barn that has spread through the barn like a typical respiratory infection as time has passed. It started Jan. 3 with neurologic signs in 3 animals, with fevers following in the others. Usually the horses have fevers first, then signs. The fevers are persistent and not well controlled with banamine. In the UConn case perhaps the fevers were missed earlier because they showed no signs to suspect any illness.

There is no known connection between these cases. No one knows of any other horses in CT so affected. It is thought that all horses get EHV at a weanling age and carry it with them for life, just like humans with colds and cold sores. The disease then shows up after periods of stress such as long distance hauling, extreme physical exertion, etc. Immunity is short duration with vaccines or clinical infection just like our cold viruses. These cases both seem to be animals that were stressed and independently broke with the disease because of the stress. This virus has been documented for at least 35 years, and is thought to be the same or similar to the virus that causes abortion in pregnant broodmares.

Therefore, if these are independent cases that developed spontaneously, then not showing or riding would not help other horses, although contact with sick or recovering animals should always be avoided.

Vaccines provide some help in preventing the disease signs, but they are not great. No vaccine has been proven to be better than the others in efficacy. Protective antibodies are only demonstrable for 2 months after vaccination or infection.

Temperatures of the horses are valid signs and a good monitoring technique. In the event of an outbreak, temperatures should be monitored twice daily. Horses showing high temperatures should be moved to isolation at the first rise of temperature.

Biosecurity will become more important with horses. Buckets and tack should stay with one individual or cleaned in appropriate disinfectant. Hand washing between horses and barns is important, as well as limiting the people that handle the horses.

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The meeting convened by CVMA came after reports of EHV outbreaks in other states, as well as two confirmed reports of outbreaks in Connecticut at Fairfield Equine Associates and the University of Connecticut. Also as a result of the two confirmed outbreaks in Connecticut, The Department of Agriculture decided to postpone a scheduled sale of rescued horses that was to take place at UConn. Additionally, the University decided to cancel the Horse Symposium scheduled for March 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>. In place of the Symposium, there will be a conference on equine health and management scheduled for March 24<sup>th</sup>.

It should be noted that this virus is not transmissible to humans.

CHC takes all issues regarding horse health very seriously, and we will continue to stay in communication with the Connecticut state veterinarian and CVMA. As information becomes available, we will make every effort to keep our members informed. Horse owners who have specific questions about EHV should contact their veterinarians directly. For more information about this release or for current updates, please visit the Connecticut Horse Council, Inc. website at [www.cthorsecouncil.org](http://www.cthorsecouncil.org) or contact CHC President Amy Stegall [president@cthorsecouncil.org](mailto:president@cthorsecouncil.org) or CHC Chairman Dr. Stewart Beckett [chip@beckettvet.com](mailto:chip@beckettvet.com)