Horse Disease: Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA)

Location: Maricopa County [★]
Name: Equine Infectious Anemia, Swamp Fever, Coggins Disease
Type: Virus
Affected Livestock: Equine - Horses, Donkeys, Mules

Transmission: The vector is biting insects such as horse and deer flies, using contaminated equipment during equine medical procedures, or from poor biosecurity practices.

Signs (can vary from horse to horse): Early Signs: Depression, low and/or high grade fever, red areas on the mucous membranes indicating small areas of hemorrhaging, no appetite and increasing muscle weakness. If horses get over the early signs of disease, they will often become asymptomatic carriers (and are infectious) for long periods of time before the disease advances far enough that the progressive, late stage disease signs become evident and the horse looks outwardly abnormal. Progressive signs: Edema, increased weakness and depression, and occasionally death.

Diagnosis: Diagnosis must be done by veterinarian. This includes lab tests for platelet counts, anemia, and the Coggins test. The test checks for antibody levels in the blood. A positive test indicates the animal has EIA.

Treatment: Initial treatment: Immediately quarantine the horses and any other horses that may have been exposed. Increase all bio-security measures at the animals location. There is not a treatment or vaccine available. Contact veterinarian immediately for testing and supportive care.

Prognosis: Very poor. Once infected, the horse will be a carrier for their lifetime, and can pass the disease onto other horses. Animals may be humanely euthanized. If not, they are required to remain in quarantine and cannot be moved from the premises without USDA APHIS approval.

Prevention: Prevention is the key to EIA. Immediately isolate a horse with a fever until the cause is identified. Apply insect repellent frequently, minimize standing water, practice fly control measures, keep the horse areas free of trash or brush piles, and regularly muck out stalls and common areas. Practice good biosecurity by using clean needles for vaccinations between each animal, disinfect all equipment for dental, lip tattoo, or surgical purposes. Choose to participate in equine events with established biosecurity measures and requirements for a negative Coggins test, and require a negative Coggins test for all incoming equines coming on your property.

NOTE: EIA is a reportable disease because it can not only affect your horse, but the health of the horses around you. For more information on reportable diseases scan the QR code (right).