



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD & AGRICULTURE

Karen Ross, Secretary

Recommended Caution for California Equine Events

March 3, 2022

Dear Equine Event Coordinators and Participants:

Equine herpesvirus myeloencephalopathy (EHM) has been detected in multiple horses in several counties in California. If not controlled, it can have significant consequences to the horse industry, infecting thousands of horses due to the extensive mixing of horses at statewide, national, and international horse events.

Equine herpesvirus causes respiratory disease, abortion, neonatal death, and the neurological disease known as EHM. It spreads in aerosolized secretions, by direct contact, and by contact with surfaces containing infected secretions. Shedding of the virus generally occurs for 7-10 days.

To reduce disease spread, the California State Veterinarian recommends that all hunter/jumper events (the most affected group) be postponed for the next 28 days, all equine events be postponed for the next 14 days, and all non-essential horse movements postponed for at least 14 days.

Horse owners must immediately isolate any horses exhibiting neurologic signs and consult their veterinarian; EHM has mandatory State reporting requirements. Owners must practice good biosecurity when they move horses in emergency situations or for veterinary care; avoid other horses and don't share tack/equipment that hasn't been properly cleaned and disinfected, including farrier and veterinary equipment.

For more information visit https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/animal_health/equine_herpes_virus.html.

*This recommendation considers an event when horses from different home premises are brought together at a single location and include, but are not limited to: competitions of any discipline (in state or out of state), rodeos, educational riding clinics, and any travel of horses to an outside facility for lessons or casual/social gathering, etc. Sanctioned horse racing tracks are **exempt** from this recommendation.*

Sincerely,

Dr. Annette Jones D.V.M.
State Veterinarian and Director

