

## **News Release to Wyoming Livestock Roundup, Casper Star Tribune, Sheridan Press and Buffalo Bulletin**

**Contact:** Dr. Jim Logan, State Veterinarian, at (307) 777-6443 or Dr. Frank Galey, Director Wyoming State Laboratory, at (307) 742-6638

### **For Immediate Release:**

Wyoming and several other states in the Western region are experiencing outbreaks of Equine Herpesvirus I (EHV-1) better known as Equine Rhinopneumonitis. Equine Herpesvirus is endemic in the not only in Wyoming but the United States and every year causes horses to have signs of illness.

There are three syndromes most commonly associated with the Equine Herpesvirus I:

- Respiratory disease
- Abortion syndrome and
- Paralytic syndrome.

The virus affects horses, donkeys, mules, and sometimes llamas. This type of herpes virus does not affect other livestock species or humans.

In early July of this year, EHV-1 was suspected, and later laboratory results confirmed EHV-1, as the cause of an outbreak of a disease causing paralysis of horses in the Buffalo, Wyoming area. Seven horses were euthanized, and one horse died as a result of the disease. Other horses that had signs of the paralytic form of EHV-1 in that outbreak have been treated and are recovering.

There have been some unverified reports of a small number of horses that may have been exposed to a horse from this outbreak. Veterinarians have notified owners of potentially exposed animals and have instructed owners to isolate their animals to prevent spread of the disease.

A separate case not related to the Buffalo, Wyoming EHV-1 outbreak, has recently been identified in the in the Sheridan, Wyoming area. This case exhibits the respiratory form of the disease, and currently involves 16 horses that are confined away from other horses to prevent the disease from spreading. There is no indication of any nervous system involvement in any of the horses in Sheridan.

Equine Herpesvirus is spread by direct contact (nose-to-nose) of an infected horse with a susceptible horse. This virus does not survive effectively in the environment outside an infected animal's body. Thus, standard common sense approaches to hygiene should help minimize virus movement.

Vaccination is recommended against the respiratory and abortion syndromes of the virus. The following standard hygienic, common sense procedures should be used to avoid spread of the disease:

- Isolation of infected animals and not allowing infected animals to share watering tanks or feed bunks. Tie your horses to trailers or other appropriate sites away from others between events at horse gatherings. If you or your clothing should become contaminated with nasal discharge of an affected horse, you should avoid coming into immediate contact with other horses.

This virus and its syndrome are not new to Wyoming or the United States. Cases of EHV-1 are common each year. Most affected horses recover; many actually never show any signs of the virus.

###