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Equine Technical Bulletin

West Niles Virus Update: WNV Cases Persist in Fayette County

The Tennessee State Veterinarian has reported 3 cases of West Niles Virus in horses this year. Two of these cases were diagnosed in Fayette County, and the 3rd was diagnosed in Bedford County (Shelbyville). Historically in the Midsouth, cases of WNV start in late August and early September; however, this year the 1st case was reported in late June. With the heavy rains this summer, and our abundant bird and mosquito populations, this early presentation is understandable. USDA-APHIS regularly updates national surveillance data on www.aphis.usda.gov. The Tennessee Health Dept. has an excellent web site at www2.state.tn.us/health/FactSheets/wnv.htm.

To the best of my knowledge, all equine veterinarians in the Midsouth continue to recommend vaccinating against WNV, as well as the other viral encephalopathies (EEE, WEE), **twice a year**. I highly recommend vaccinating your horse **now** to ensure that your horse's antibody titers are maximized before the fall bird migrations.

For a complete list of **Equine Vaccination Recommendations** call ACH or visit our website at www.1animalcare.com.

Vesicular Stomatitis:

Effective 22 July 2004, the TN Dept. of Agriculture implemented emergency rules to protect the state's livestock from the potential introduction of Vesicular Stomatitis into Tennessee. Vesicular Stomatitis is a viral disease affecting hoofed animals and **human handlers**. Affected livestock have blister-like lesions in the mouth, lips, nostrils, hooves, and teats. As the blisters break, painful ulcers form that cause loss of appetite and lameness. The disease can cause significant economic loss to livestock producers and is of special concern because the clinical signs are similar to the devastating foreign disease, *Foot & Mouth Disease*.

Stringent importation requirements were implemented in response to confirmation of the disease in Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. Any hoofed animals, including horses, originating or visiting infected regions must be quarantined for 14 days and examined by an accredited veterinarian at a minimum. Some shipments may require USDA Permits and laboratory testing.

If you are planning a trip west, please call ACH for updated information and to get your Travel Documents in order.

USDA is very serious about stopping this disease!

Anecdotal Story: During the 1997 Vesicular Stomatitis outbreak in New Mexico, Melanie and I were practicing in the Texas Panhandle. Sheriff's Departments and State Troopers in Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas actively inspected horse and livestock shipments for proper travel documentation. Violators were fined \$500 per head, and I actually had a client put in jail until his load of horses could be verified.

If you have any questions please call ACH. More specific information can be found at www.tennessee.gov/agriculture.

Focus on Dentistry:

Myth: Older horses have more dental problems than younger horses.

Fact: Several independent studies comparing young, adult, and senior horses have shown that all age groups have the same number of dental problems. Studies have also shown that many dental problems seen in adults start in the 3-4 year old colts & fillies and get worse with age.

Key Point: Dental disease almost always gets progressively worse with age and **never** self-corrects. Once you notice clinical signs of dental problems (weight loss, dropping feed, performance refusal, etc) the disease is usually in advanced stages.

Goal: The goal of dentistry (whether equine, pet, or human) is to treat problems as early as possible and then to maintain a balanced and healthy mouth.

Many of you know that I have turned into a dental evangelist. There is no other area of veterinary care that has such a direct and dramatic influence on a horse's behavior, feed efficiency, overall health, performance, and longevity. There is also no other area of basic health care that my profession misunderstands and has neglected. Studies clearly show that over 70% of horses (young and old) have dental disease and that the majority will suffer their entire life without treatment. The good news is that the veterinary profession has recognized this problem and is actively addressing it.

Earlier this month, I had the opportunity to personally work with Dr. Jack Easley in Shelbyville, KY on a surgical tooth extraction case and on the orthodontic correction of a Parrotmouth (Overbite) foal. Dr. Easley is considered by most experts to be the world authority on Equine Dentistry, and training with him whether personal or at group meetings is always a privilege.

Melanie and I will both be attending the Annual Veterinary Dental Forum, 30 Sept – 3 Oct.

For more information about Equine Dentistry (and some interesting pictures) visit our website at www.1animalcare.com. I also have a 30minute CD-Rom on Equine Dentistry available for checkout, and am happy to give presentations to clubs, barns, or anyone interested!

More Farm Calls:

ACH has been scheduling Farm Calls on Tuesdays and Thursdays for the past few years. Due to a significantly increased dental caseload, we are adding Fridays to the Farm Call Schedule. Please call Karen to schedule appointments as early as possible since our calendar often fills several weeks in advance.

Equifair now Mid-South Horse Expo:

The Shelby Farms Equestrian Alliance has changed the name of the Equifair to the *Mid-South Horse Expo*. This year's event will be held on 16-17 October at the Shelby Farms Show Place Area. The *Expo* educates horse owners about the diversity of the horse industry through Demonstrations, Presentations, and Vender Booths. Attendants have the opportunity to learn about different horse breeds and riding disciplines, as well as, veterinary and farrier topics, training, nutrition, and husbandry. Visiting this event has proven to be enjoyable, as well as educational for all ages of horse owners and all levels of equestrian experience. For more information visit www.mid-southhorseexpo.com.

I will give a presentation on Equine Dentistry at 2 PM, Saturday, 16 October. The presentation will cover Juvenile, Senior, and Performance Dentistry. For those who attended the Dental Presentation during the last 3 Expos, I promise to have new material, better pictures, and a new video.

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please call ACH.
Our job is serving you and your animals!

Stephen S. Galloway, DVM