



ANIMAL CARE HOSPITAL, 8565 Hwy 64, Somerville, TN 38068, (901) 466-9224

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Equine Technical Bulletin

West Niles Virus Update:

As of November 20, the USDA-APHIS has confirmed a total of 413 equine cases of WNV in 17 states (12 States in September) and estimates the mortality rate in these cases at approximately 24% (down from 25% in September, 38% in August). Keep in mind when reviewing this data that only neurological horses are being tested for WNV, and we currently have no estimate for the actual infection rate in horses. The majority of cases have been identified in Florida (303 horses) and Georgia (37 horses). Tennessee has confirmed 1 case in Greene County (Eastern TN), Mississippi has confirmed 5 cases in Lee County, and Kentucky has 8 confirmed cases. WNV has been report in the states to our west and is expected to reach California by Spring 2003. USDA-APHIS regularly updates surveillance data on www.aphis.usda.gov.

Due to the rapid spread of this virus, many states are now recommending the vaccination of horses. I like to vaccinate horses in Feb/ Mar prior to the spring bird migrations. Since the WNV has been isolated from birds in the Midsouth, I am recommending vaccinating all horses against the WNV starting this spring. The cost of the vaccine is \$20 per dose, and an initial 2 dose series followed by semi-annual boosting is recommended. The Fort Dodge Vaccine is under Conditional License, and the level of protection acquired by using this product is unknown, but initial testing is looking promising.

Pregnant Mares:

All Fescue forages (including hay) should be removed from Broodmares expecting in March. Less than 10% Fescue in a mare's diet during the last 3 months of gestation has caused abortions. An antidote to Fescue Toxicosis is available; however, prevention is the best cure for this disease.

In January, Broodmares expecting in March, May, & July should be vaccinated against Abortive Rhinopneumonitis. Also, vaccinating a mare during the last month of pregnancy will increase the colostral antibodies passed to the foal.

Information Sheets on Fescue Toxicosis, Vaccinations, and Broodmare & Foal Care are available at the Hospital.

Equine Botulism:

In the December Technical Bulletin, I presented a case of Botulism that I diagnosed in Fayette County. In the February 2002 issue of the *Veterinary Compendium*, veterinarians from the University of Tennessee presented a case report about a Botulism outbreak on a 100 horse, saddlebred breeding farm in which 10 of 15 yearlings died and 2 stallions were treated and recovered. The evidence strongly suggested that the source of the Botulism Toxin in this case was decomposing grass round bales which had been baled properly but exposed to rain during storage.

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

♥The **Animal Care Hospital** is a proud Member of the *Fayette County Chamber of Commerce* and the *Midsouth Better Business Bureau*.♥