



September 10, 2021

Equine Infectious Anemia Disease Alert for Texas Veterinarians

In August 2021, the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) received seven positive confirmations of equine infectious anemia (EIA) in Texas. Since the start of the year, the state has seen a total of 49 cases of EIA. Confirmations of EIA have been reported in Bastrop, Crane, Dallas, Deaf Smith, Ector, Harris, Johnson, Parker, Refugio, Tarrant, Travis, and Webb County.

Cases of this blood-borne disease, along with piroplasmiasis (piro), have seen a rise in Texas, due in large part to humans. People play a large role in EIA transmission by using contaminated medical equipment, such as needles, syringes, IV sets and medications. When equipment is contaminated with blood from an infected horse it can spread the disease to healthy, unexposed horses when used again.

The TAHC urges veterinarians to encourage their clients to only use new needles, one needle per horse, to never use blood-contaminated medical equipment on multiple equine and to get equine regularly tested for diseases, such as EIA. The TAHC is committed to protecting the health and marketability of Texas equine, and is providing the following information regarding EIA to increase awareness and encourage proactive measures in preventing the disease.

2021 Texas Equine Infectious Anemia Confirmations	
Texas County	Confirmation(s) Received
Bastrop	5
Crane	10
Dallas	1
Deaf Smith	1
Ector	1
Harris	4
Johnson	14
Parker	1
Refugio	6
Tarrant	3
Travis	2
Webb	1
Total:	49

WHAT IS EQUINE INFECTIOUS ANEMIA?

EIA is an incurable, infectious disease caused by a virus that affects members of the Equidae family, such as horses, ponies, zebras, mules, and donkeys. EIA is found widely throughout the world. There is no evidence that EIA is a threat to human health.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

EIA signs and symptoms vary depending on the equine’s disease resistance, the virus’ ability to cause disease, and stress factors. EIA can appear as acute, chronic or inapparent. Most common signs include, but are not limited to:

- Fever
- Depression



- Low platelet count
- Anemia
- Red or purple spots on the mucous membranes
- Edema
- Muscle weakness
- Muscle atrophy

TRANSMISSION

EIA is spread through blood-to-blood contact. It can be transmitted from an infected horse to a healthy horse by blood-feeding insects such as horseflies, deerflies, or stable flies. EIA can also be spread through the transfer of blood during a transfusion, or through the use of contaminated needles and other contaminated medical equipment. Equine owners should be encouraged to seek guidance from a private veterinarian before performing any injectable treatments.

PREVENTION

There is no vaccine available for EIA. Equine can be protected by implementing insect controls, keeping stables and facilities clean, using one needle per horse, separating infected equine from the healthy, and never using blood-contaminated medical equipment on multiple equine. Many horses have very mild or inapparent signs on first exposure, and carry this virus subclinically. Obtaining yearly negative EIA “Coggins” tests and opting for regular, voluntary testing is important in maintaining an EIA-free herd.

EQUINE TESTING REQUIREMENTS

Equine must meet TAHC EIA testing requirements when changing ownership, participating in an assembly, or stabled within the state of Texas. For a summary of equine testing requirements, or to determine if an equine animal qualifies for an exception, visit www.tahc.texas.gov/regs/EntryRequirements_Equine.pdf.

REPORTING EQUINE INFECTIOUS ANEMIA

Veterinarians and their clients play an important role in stopping the spread of EIA and other blood-borne equine disease by reporting sick equine. The TAHC should be notified of all suspected and confirmed cases of EIA. The Texas Administrative Code requires that certain livestock and fowl diseases be reported to the TAHC within 24 hours of diagnosis. To report sick equine, call the 24/7 TAHC Hotline at 1-800-550-8242.

The Texas Animal Health Commission posts all EIA confirmations on the Equine Disease Communication Center website. Veterinarians can stay informed of EIA, Equine Herpesvirus-1 (EHV-1) and Equine Herpes Myeloencephalopathy (EHM) cases across the country by visiting, <https://www.equinediseasecc.org/alerts>.

MORE RESOURCES

- <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/equine/eia/equine-infectious-anemia>
- https://www.tahc.texas.gov/news/brochures/TAHCBrochure_EIA.pdf