



For Immediate Release
March 12, 2024

Equine Piroplasmosis Confirmed in Hood County Horse

AUSTIN, TX – The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) received confirmation of equine piroplasmosis (EP) in a Hood County Quarter Horse March 6, 2024. This is the first confirmed case of EP in Texas this year.

Testing performed to meet regulatory requirements confirmed the equine EP positive. The premises has been quarantined and will not be released until the TAHC's requirements are met. TAHC staff are working closely with the owner and local veterinarian to implement biosecurity measures and assess any potential for spread.

EP affects horses, donkeys, mules, and zebras. Clinical signs are often non-specific and can include fever, reduced or lack of appetite, anemia, jaundice (yellow discoloration of mucous membranes), exercise intolerance or weakness, weight loss, swollen abdomen, labored breathing, colic, and sudden death.

"Equine piroplasmosis is transmitted through blood-to-blood contact, not through close proximity or nose-to-nose contact," said Dr. Bud Dinges, TAHC executive director and state veterinarian. "Ticks may be a vector to spread the disease, but many cases in Texas are linked to the use of "dirty" medical equipment. Ensure needles are not being used for more than one injection and remember to regularly test for blood-borne diseases to help monitor for disease and mitigate transmission to other Texas equine."

Blood-borne diseases, including EP and equine infectious anemia (EIA), may be prevented by practicing strong biosecurity and implementing tick prevention controls. Only new, clean needles should be used when injecting medicines; needles, syringes, or IV sets should never be reused. Blood transfusions should be performed only by licensed veterinarians using licensed and approved blood products or donor horses negative for EP and EIA. Keep pastures mowed, remove brush and weeds, and use topical insecticides on your premises to reduce tick exposures. There are no vaccines available for EP prevention.

For more information on EP please visit

https://www.tahc.texas.gov/news/brochures/TAHCFactSheet_Piroplasmosis.pdf.

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The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) was established in 1893 as the Livestock Sanitary Commission and charged with protecting the state's domestic animals "from all contagious or infectious diseases of a malignant character." TAHC remains true to this charge while evolving with the times to protect the health and marketability of all Texas livestock and poultry. Learn more about the TAHC by visiting www.tahc.texas.gov.