

EQUINE HERPES MYELOENCEPHALOPATHY

EQUINE EVENT SPONSOR GUIDANCE

The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) encourages event sponsors to take all necessary precautions to prevent the spread of equine herpes myeloencephalopathy (EHM) and protect equine health. Given the nature of this virus and routes of transmission, TAHC recommends consulting with a veterinarian and the TAHC to evaluate the extent of an outbreak in order to prevent further exposure.

Equine herpes myeloencephalopathy is a neurologic disease in horses linked to the equine herpes virus (EHV-1) that can cause respiratory disease, abortion, and neonatal death. Neurologic signs appear as a result of damage to blood vessels in the brain and spinal cord.

EHM is spread through horse-to-horse contact, but may also be spread indirectly through contact with objects contaminated with the virus, such as clothing, human hands, equipment, tack, trailers, feed/water buckets and wash rags. Presentation of EHM in horses can be acute with rapid progression and high clinical severity. Measures to prevent contact of horses from exposure to the virus and increased biosecurity overall are recommended during events.

If animals are traveling interstate to attend an event, it is important that owners contact the state of destination to verify entry requirements. Animals under TAHC hold orders or quarantines are under movement restrictions and should comply with set requirements to help keep their horses and the equine industry safe.

Event sponsors are encouraged to prioritize the following:

- As required in [TAC Title 4 Part 2 Chapter 51.4](#), an event sponsor must maintain equine owner's name and contact information, including address and county of origin.
 - Acquiring contact information, including phone number and valid email address, for participants is also very helpful for animal disease traceability purposes.
- Stay vigilant, practice strong biosecurity, and encourage sick horses to stay home and isolated.
- Assess health status of horses prior to entry and unloading.
 - Prioritize sanitation and biosecurity before, during, and after the event.
- Encourage twice daily rectal temperature monitoring for 14 days prior to and after an event.
- Immediately isolate any horse with a temperature above 101.5°F or showing other signs consistent with EHM and contact a veterinarian for further evaluation, testing, and treatment.
 - Any horse with a temperature of 101.5°F or more should be PCR tested at an official lab, such as, [Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory \(TVMDL\)](#), Cornell Animal Health Diagnostic Center (ADHC), or other AAVLD accredited lab.

Contact your [TAHC region office](#) for specific questions related to event guidance, and visit the [TAHC website](#) for general disease information and biosecurity resources. The equine industry is encouraged to obtain the latest information on equine disease events nationwide on the [Equine Disease Communication Center \(EDCC\) website](#).

