



July 22, 2009

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HCBC E- BULLETIN

Warning - Unconfirmed Equine Influenza Outbreak

The Boundary Horse Association has decided to cancel the BHA Funday on Saturday July 18th due to the suspected Equine Influenza outbreak in the Grand Forks area. We feel that at this time in order to assist in minimizing the risk to other healthy horses it would be wise not to hold this event. If you suspect that your horse has come in contact with an infected horse please keep your horse at home, and separate it from other horses at your barn.

The Equine Influenza Virus in our area has not been confirmed but the clinical signs and symptoms are consistent with the virus. One horse in our area has been tested, the results are not in yet. Equine Influenza is an upper respiratory viral infection. Symptoms include pyrexia (fever) and a harsh dry cough, followed by mucopurulent nasal discharge and lethargy. The incubation period is approx. 2-3 days depending on the horse. A vaccinated horse may show milder symptoms.

This virus is spread via aerosolized droplets dispersed by coughing. However, the virus can be spread by contaminated equipment (buckets, grooming aids) and contaminated hands. The contagious period can be up to 2-3 weeks and coughing may last up to 3-4 weeks. Horses can remain infective and spread the virus to other horses for up to 10 days with their nasal secretions. It is recommended that you do not ride your horse during that time. When handling a sick horse it is important to wash your hands and change your clothes before handling another healthy horse. It has been suggested that if your horse has a fever then you may want to treat with antibiotics for 5-7 days.

The word of mouth in the area is that the majority of horses infected have been at the same show and are showing the same symptoms. Other horses that have come in contact with these horse are also now showing the same symptoms. If you have vaccinated your horse but are in a high risk situation such as showing, eventing or riding with other horses, it is recommended that you may want to booster your horse. The flu part of a 4 way vaccine is the weakest part of the vaccine, so it may not be as effective. You can get a vaccine that is strictly for the flu if you are concerned, or booster with a 4way 3-4 times per year.

Please contact Dr. Ruth Sims at Kettle River Veterinary services for more information.

How to protect your horses ? BIOSECURITY Brochure.

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