



To: Newsroom Directors and Assignment Editors

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Delaware Equine Herpesvirus (EHV-1) update

On Wednesday, December 10, blood and nasal swab samples were collected from all horses in the quarantined barn and submitted to the University of Kentucky (UK) for PCR testing to detect EHV-1.

On the evening of December 10, Dr. Heather Hirst, Delaware State Veterinarian, was notified that one of 16 horses in the quarantined barn had developed a fever that same evening. On December 11, the febrile horse was moved to an isolation facility approved by the DE Department of Agriculture. No other horses are at the facility or on neighboring properties. During a quarantine situation, any horse that develops a fever or neurologic (nervous system) clinical signs is considered highly suspect. Such horses are treated as a source of virus until lab results are received, which can take 48 - 72 hours.

Today, December 12, Dr. Hirst received PCR test results from UK:

- The isolated (febrile) horse tested negative for EHV-1 on blood and nasal swab. A repeat sample was collected and results are pending. False negatives can occur and a second confirmation of the negative will give us more confidence that the horse's fever is not due to EHV-1 infection.
- One horse in the quarantined barn tested nasal swab positive for EHV-1. The blood sample was test-negative, but the horse is being treated as a new case at this time. The horse has absolutely no clinical signs of disease. It was moved to an isolation facility approved by the DE Department of Agriculture on December 12.
- The fourteen remaining horses in the quarantined barn tested negative for EHV-1 on both nasal swabs and blood samples.

The quarantine will remain in effect on the original barn for at least 21 days. The two horses in isolation are also considered to be under quarantine and no horses may move in or out of said facility. Biosecurity protocols are being implemented at both locations to prevent the spread of the virus. Although she says it is still too early to become overly optimistic, Dr. Hirst reported that she is very impressed with the cooperation and dedication of everyone involved in the quarantine to date. "With continued efforts such as we've seen thus far, I am hopeful that we can keep the spread of the virus contained."

Any horses developing fever or clinical signs of neurologic disease will be tested immediately. All horses involved in the current quarantine will be tested again prior to lifting the quarantine and updates will be provided as they are available.

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