Ministry of Agriculture and Food

Disease Alert

Disease: Equine Herpesvirus

Species Affected: Thoroughbred horse

Location: Okanagan

Date: November 12th, 2026

Description: Equine herpesvirus 1 (EHV-1) myeloencephalopathy has been confirmed in a privately owned herd in the Okanagan. Two horses were submitted to the laboratory on November 9, where clinical presentations and post-mortem findings were consistent with EHV-1 infection and PCR testing was positive for EHV-1. The herd owners are implementing voluntary movement restrictions as well as biosecurity measures under veterinary supervision.

Disease information: Equine herpesviruses are very common viruses in horse populations worldwide, and horses carry the virus without signs of illness. EHV-1 causes respiratory disease, abortion, and neurological disease. The virus is spread through horse-to-horse contact or through contaminated environment, clothing, or equipment. The incubation period is typically 4–6 days but may be as short as 24 hours or as long as 14 days. After onset of illness, shedding typically lasts for 7–10 days but can be much longer.

Recommendations:

- Make sure all horses under your care are up to date on their vaccinations.
- Monitor horses for signs of EHV-1 (particularly fever, nasal discharge, lethargy) and contact your veterinarian if illness is detected.
- Event managers and trainers/owners can implement daily temperature check protocols on horses attending group events, and any horse developing fever (>38.6 C) should be isolated promptly.
- Evaluate whether to attend group events in consultation with your veterinarian.
- Practice strict biosecurity when bringing horses or people onto your premises or while travelling with your horse.

Resources:

- HCBV Biosecurity for the Equine Industry
- AAEP EHV1-4-guidelines-2021.pdf
- AAEP EHV FAQ for Owners