



Equine herpes myeloencephalopathy

September 2021

Confirmed equine herpesvirus encephalomyelopathy in a horse housed in the western lower mainland of BC

On August 24th, 2021 the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Fisheries became aware of a suspect case of equine herpes myeloencephalopathy (EHM) caused by equine herpesvirus-1 (EHV-1) infection at a facility in the western lower mainland of BC. A 23-year-old gelding was euthanized after showing difficulty urinating and marked incoordination in the hind end, which progressed to him being unable to rise. On post-mortem examination, nasal and brain/spinal cord samples tested PCR positive for EHV-1, however the strain could not be determined. Final diagnosis of EHM via microscopic examination was confirmed on September 3, 2021. Horses that were in-contact with this case have been monitored daily and none have exhibited any symptoms or shown any signs of fever. One horse that was in contact with this case left the barn to attend a show on August 22, 2021 and has since returned to the property of origin. The facility is under veterinary supervision and the farm managers have implemented biosecurity procedures and movement restrictions.

EHV-1 does not pose a threat to public health or food safety.

EHM is notifiable to BC's Chief Veterinarian under the Animal Health Act. Attending veterinarians concerned about potential cases of EHM may contact the Plant and Animal Health Branch at 604-556-3003.

EHV-1 infection in horses can cause respiratory disease, abortion, neonatal foal death, and/or neurological disease.