

Equine infectious anemia hits Nebraska

Written by Gothenburg Times

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LINCOLN—A University of Nebraska-Lincoln horse specialist warns Nebraska horse owners that 12 confirmed Equine Infectious Anemia cases were reported in a horse herd in northwestern Nebraska.

EIA is a blood borne disease that is typically transmitted by biting insects, such as horseflies, deerflies and mosquitoes, but also can be transmitted from horse to horse through infected needles, said Kathy Anderson, UNL Extension horse specialist.

“There is no cure for EIA, so prevention is the key to controlling the disease,” she said.

It is important horse owners take biosecurity precautions to reduce the risk of infection in their herd. For more information to protect the herd, visit www.nda.nebraska.gov.

The Coggins test, used to detect the presence of EIA, is a simple blood test done by a veterinarian. The Coggins test is often required to transport, show, sell or board a horse.

A U.S Department of Agriculture website at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/equine/eia/eia_distribution_maps.htm maps the number of EIA cases in the U.S. for the last eight years by affected state.

In 2011, there were 82 positive horses and 30 positive premises in the U.S. While there is normally a very low incidence in most areas of the country, EIA is still a disease of concern, Anderson said.

“As you will see, these are the first reported cases in Nebraska for some time,” Anderson said.

To read more about EIA, check out the information on HorseQuest at <http://www.extension.org/pages/10386/disease:-equine-infectious-anemia> or this APHIS fact

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sheet at

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/content/printable_version/fs_equine_infectious_anemia.pdf.

The USDA also has a fact sheet at

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/equine/eia/eia_info_sheet.pdf on the prevalence of EIA in the U.S. from 1972 to 2005. As of 2005, the incidence appears to be less than eight horses positive for 100,000 horses tested.

EIA symptoms include: fever, depression, weight loss, swelling and anemia. Producers with horses, donkeys or mules that exhibit these symptoms should contact their veterinarian immediately.