

New Jersey Department of Agriculture
Memo

To: Veterinarians

From: Nancy E. Halpern, DVM, State Veterinarian

Date: July 28, 2008

Re: Update on Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile Virus (WNV)

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Animal Industry reports that as of July 25, 2008, they have had 61 confirmed cases of EEE in horses. All but 3 of these horses have died and less than 5 of those infected had been vaccinated in the past year. The infection is fatal in more than 90% of cases with horses becoming rapidly ill and then succumbing and dying even with treatment.

Currently, no cases of EEE or WNV have been reported in NJ for 2008.

Both WNV and Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) are carried in bird populations and transmitted by mosquitoes. Horses infected with EEE rarely survive. Neither virus is directly transmitted from infected horses to other horses or humans. Vaccination of horses against WNV and EEE is recommended based on consultation with the attending veterinarian. According to AAEP vaccine protocol recommendations, annual revaccination for EEE must be completed prior to vector season in the spring. In animals of high risk or with limited immunity, more frequent vaccination or appropriately timed vaccination is recommended in order to induce protective immunity during periods of likely exposure. In areas where mosquitoes are active year-round, many veterinarians elect to vaccinate horses at 6-month intervals to ensure uniform protection throughout the year, although this practice is not specifically recommended by manufacturers of vaccines. During an outbreak such as Florida is experiencing, vaccination may be increased to every 4 months. WNV vaccination should be done annually. For more information on vaccination protocols see: http://www.aaep.org/core_vaccinations.htm

Please Note: Horses or other species with suspicious clinical signs or confirmed WNV or EEE infection must be reported to the State Veterinarian at 609-292-3965 within 48 hours. Laboratory specimens should be sent to the NJDA Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory for testing. Laboratory submission forms must accompany the specimens. Forms can be obtained by contacting the Division of Animal Health or may be downloaded from the following website:

www.state.nj.us/agriculture/pdf/05eqneurowork.pdf

For more information about West Nile virus in horses, visit the New Jersey Department of Agriculture web site
atwww.state.nj.us/agriculture/divisions/ah/diseases/westnile.html.

For more information about Eastern Equine Encephalitis in horses, visit the New Jersey Department of Agriculture web site
athttp://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/divisions/ah/diseases/equine_encephalomyelitis.html.