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# Equine Disease Alert - Vesicular Stomatitis and Equine Infectious Anaemia

Number 03 of 2020



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## Vesicular Stomatitis

### Argentina

- On 20 May 2020, Argentina reported an outbreak of Vesicular Stomatitis in an equine in the district of Capitán Sarmiento, Buenos Aires
- Vesicular Stomatitis is endemic in southern Mexico, Central America and northern South America but outbreaks can also occur sporadically in Argentina, Southern Brazil and North America.
- No horses have been imported into Ireland from Argentina since December 2019.

### USA

- So far this year, there have been outbreaks of Vesicular Stomatitis in Arizona, New Mexico and Texas in 33 premises.
- In 4 premises in Texas, bovines were clinically affected as well as equines.
- 14 premises (6 in Arizona, 6 in New Mexico and 2 in Texas) currently remain under restriction.

## About Vesicular Stomatitis

- Vesicular Stomatitis is a viral disease that occurs worldwide in horses, donkeys, mules, cattle, pigs and sheep.
- Most common clinical signs in horses are vesicles, erosions and ulcers on the upper surface of the tongues, lips and gums, and around the nostrils and corners of the mouth. These lesions can also be found on teats, the prepuce and the coronary band.
- Excessive salivation is often the first sign followed by a transient fever when lesions appear.
- The lesions are painful and result in anorexia, refusal to drink, lameness.
- Up to 90% of animals on a premise can be affected. Death is rare in horses and cattle but can occur in pigs. Affected animals usually recover within 2 – 3 weeks
- Vesicular Stomatitis is important due to its similarity to foot and mouth disease and because of the economic losses it causes.
- Transmission of Vesicular Stomatitis is not fully understood. It is believed that midges, sandflies, blackflies, mosquitos and other flies introduce the virus into domestic animal populations. Once there, animal to animal spread occurs by direct contact and exposure to fomites including feed and water.
- There is no specific treatment and no vaccine for the disease.
- Vesicular Stomatitis is a notifiable disease in Ireland. If you suspect the disease you should immediately isolate the affected animal indoors and notify the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine by contacting your local Regional Veterinary office (see below for details).
- Humans are also susceptible to the virus. It causes an acute illness similar to influenza with fever, muscle aches and headache.



- Human infection is common in endemic areas. Infection occurs from handling affected animals, contaminated fomites, tissues or blood.

### **Risk to Ireland**

- There has never been a case of Vesicular Stomatitis in Ireland.
- The import requirements for equidae into the EU require that equidae dispatched from affected countries come from holdings that have been free of the disease for at least 6 months. As a result of the recent case of Argentina, equidae must also be certified with a negative test result for Vesicular Stomatitis.
- DAFM will continue to monitor the situation.

## **Equine Infectious Anaemia**

- Further to the NDCC Equine Disease Alert 02 of 2020 released in May, Germany reported an outbreak of Equine Infectious Anaemia on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June 2020.
- The outbreak in Germany involved a single equine, in the federal state of Hesse, in Western Germany on a premise containing seven horses. The affected horse was euthanized and the outbreak investigation is continuing.
- A number of horses have been imported to Ireland from Germany since April 1<sup>st</sup> 2020. All originated in locations too distant from the outbreak in Hesse to be deemed at risk.
- In addition there have been 6 further outbreaks of Equine Infectious Anaemia in Romania as well as another outbreak in Bulgaria.
- DAFM will continue to monitor the situation with EIA in Europe.

### **Measures that you can take to protect your animals**

- The ITBA Code of Practice recommends testing mares, stallions and teasers for EIA each year before breeding.
- As for other diseases, good biosecurity is essential including the disinfection of veterinary and dental equipment before and after use and not re-using needles or syringes.
- Only use licensed biological products.

### **Further information on Vesicular Stomatitis:**

DAFM website:

<http://www.animalhealthsurveillance.agriculture.gov.ie/individualdiseaselistings/vesicularstomatitis/>

European Commission:

[https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/live\\_animals/equine\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/live_animals/equine_en)

Contact details for RVOs available at:



<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/contact/>

## **Further information on Equine Infectious Anaemia:**

DAFM website:

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/animalhealthwelfare/diseasecontrol/equineinfectiousanaemia/>

Equine Infectious Anaemia Factsheet:

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/animalhealthwelfare/diseasecontrols/enquineinfectiousanaemia/EquineInfectiousAnaemiaFactSheet020719.docx>

European Commission:

[https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/live\\_animals/equine\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/live_animals/equine_en)

ITBA Codes of Practice:

[https://itba.info/Content/2020/3/Codes\\_of\\_Practice\\_2020.pdf](https://itba.info/Content/2020/3/Codes_of_Practice_2020.pdf)

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