

Equine Piroplasmosis (EP) Update

February 20, 2009

The last premises determined to have had horses infected with Equine Piroplasmosis (EP) was released from state quarantine February 12th. The premises was released after meeting the requirements that all positive horses have been removed from the premises and that all other horses on the premises tested negative at least 60 days after the removal of positive horses. In addition, the premises must have undergone intensive tick surveillance without finding exotic ticks or domestic ticks testing positive for EP.

During the investigation, 25 premises were quarantined and over 200 horses were tested for the disease. In all, 20 horses on 7 premises were infected with the organism that causes EP. For a summary of the investigation, see the tables below.

Evidence uncovered during the investigation indicated that transmission of the EP organism occurred due to management practices and not by natural transmission which occurs via ticks. Extensive tick surveillance was conducted, however, and 63 ticks (*Dermacentor variabilis*), shown to be experimental vectors for the organism, were tested and found to be negative for EP.

The only restrictions on horses are the additional requirements imposed by Canada for horses being imported from Florida, as listed below. With the release of the last positive premises, the Florida State Veterinarian's Office is working with the United States Department of Agriculture to ask Canadian officials to remove the increased requirements on Florida horses.

- An import permit (for the Canadian importer);
- The horse(s) are inspected by a veterinarian within fifteen (15) days preceding the date of importation;
- Certification statements on the export health certificate:
 - "The horse(s) have not been on a premises where equine piroplasmosis (clinical or serology) has occurred during the 60 days immediately preceding exportation to Canada, nor has this disease occurred on any adjoining premises during the same period of time."
 - "They must have tested negative using a cELISA test or, where applicable, an alternate test acceptable to CFIA for equine piroplasmosis, during the fifteen (15) days prior to the date of importation into Canada."

Canada has also asked for additional certification for equines from other states, for all certificates issued after September 15, 2008:

"During the previous twenty-one (21) days, the animal(s) in this shipment has/have not been in the state of Florida."

Positive Premises Data 2/12/09							
	Premises 1 (Manatee)	Premises 2 (De Soto)	Premises 3 (Polk)	Prem. 4 (Polk)	Prem. 5 (Lake)	Prem. 6 (Dade)	Prem. 7 (Orange)
# of Positive Horses	5	2	6	4	1	1	1
# of Horses on Premises	21	29	22	13	8	12	0
# Positives left on Premises	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Premises Currently Under State Quarantine	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Quarantine Data 2/12/09	
Number of Quarantines Placed	25
Number of Premises Currently Under Quarantine	0
Total Number of Premises Having Horses Test Positive	7
Number of Premises Currently Having Positive Horses	0

January 9, 2009

An additional premises was released from State quarantine today, after the 60 day post exposure time period had elapsed and all horses on the premises tested negative for EP. With the release of the Polk County premises (premises 3 below) there is only one premises, still under quarantine, located in DeSoto County (premises 2 below). There are no positive horses remaining on the quarantined premises, which has completed a 30 day testing with all results being negative. The 60 day testing for quarantine release has been scheduled for early next month. For a summary of the positive premises data see the tables below.

Transmission of the organism, that causes EP, is still believed to have occurred via management practices, however, because the natural vector for the organism is ticks, surveillance is continuing. To date more than 60 ticks (*Dermacentor variabilis*), that have

been shown to be experimental vectors for the organism, have been tested and found to be negative for EP.

The only restrictions on horses are the additional requirements imposed by Canada for horses being imported from Florida. Please see the information in the November 21 update for the specific additions to the Canadian importation requirements.

Positive Premises Data 1/9/09							
	Premises 1 (Manatee)	Premises 2 (De Soto)	Premises 3 (Polk)	Prem. 4 (Polk)	Prem. 5 (Lake)	Prem. 6 (Dade)	Prem. 7 (Orange)
# of Positive Horses	5	2	6	4	1	1	1
# of Horses on Premises	21	29	22	13	8	12	0
# Positives left on Premises	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Premises Currently Under State Quarantine	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

Quarantine Data 1/9/09	
Number of Quarantines Placed	25
Number of Premises Currently Under Quarantine	1
Total Number of Premises Having Horses Test Positive	7
Number of Premises Currently Having Positive Horses	0

December 8, 2008

The last positive EP horse was removed from the quarantined Desoto County premises (premises 2 below) last week. This premises now joins one additional premises (premises 3 below) still under state quarantine, in awaiting the 60 day time period to elapse before retesting of horses can be done. Quarantined premises are released only after all horses on the premises test negative after 60 days from exposure and no exotic or domestic ticks testing positive for EP are found. For a summary of the positive premise data see the tables below.

While ticks are the natural vector for the organism, the evidence at this time continues to implicate management practices in the spread of the disease. Tick surveillance is continuing and more than 60 ticks (*Dermacentor variabilis*), that have been shown to be experimental vectors for the organism, have been tested and found to be negative for EP.

There are no restrictions on Florida horses with the exception of the additional requirements imposed by Canada for horses being imported from Florida. Please see the information in the November 21 update for the specific additions to the Canadian importation requirements.

Positive Premises Data 12/8/08							
	Premises 1 (Manatee)	Premises 2 (De Soto)	Premises 3 (Polk)	Prem. 4 (Polk)	Prem. 5 (Lake)	Prem. 6 (Dade)	Prem. 7 (Orange)
# of Positive Horses	5	2	6	4	1	1	1
# of Horses on Premises	21	29	22	13	8	12	0
# Positives left on Premises	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Quarantine Data 12/8/08	
Number of Quarantines Placed	25
Number of Premises Currently Under Quarantine	2
Total Number of Premises Having Horses Test Positive	7
Number of Premises Currently Having Positive Horses	0

December 2, 2008

Two additional premises have been released from State quarantine as all horses tested negative for EP after the required 60 day period, since exposure to the disease. The release of these 2 premises leaves only 2 premises remaining under quarantine. The 2 remaining premises are located in Polk and Desoto Counties. See the tables below for more positive premises information.

Tick surveillance is continuing but the transmission of the organism is still believed to have resulted from management practices and not naturally via ticks. Despite extensive tick surveillance, no exotic ticks have been identified. Approximately 60 ticks (*Dermacentor variabilis*), that have been shown to be experimental vectors for the organism, have been tested and found to be negative for EP.

Positive Premises Data 12/2/08							
	Premises 1 (Manatee)	Premises 2 (De Soto)	Premises 3 (Polk)	Prem. 4 (Polk)	Prem. 5 (Lake)	Prem. 6 (Dade)	Prem. 7 (Orange)
# of Positive Horses	5	2	6	4	1	1	1
# of Horses on Premises	21	29	22	13	8	12	0
# Positives left on Premises	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

Quarantine Data 12/2/08	
Number of Quarantines Placed	25
Number of Premises Currently Under Quarantine	2
Total Number of Premises Having Horses Test Positive	7
Number of Premises Currently Having Positive Horses	1

November 21, 2008

One premises under state quarantine for EP was released today after meeting the requirements of a 60 day period since exposure, all horses testing negative and no exotic or positive tick found on the premises. There are now 4 premises remaining under quarantine, which are awaiting the required 60 day period to elapse before being tested for release. All four premises were ones that had horses test positive for EP earlier in the investigation. For a summary of the positive premises information see the tables below.

One additional horse tested positive on a positive premise being retested. The premises had an earlier positive horse which was removed in September. It is believed the latest horse was infected by a contaminated needle shared prior to the removal of the initial positive horse. The premises must pass a negative test at least 60 days after removal of the last positive horse in order to be released from quarantine.

While the evidence continues to implicate management practices as the cause of the spread of the EP organism, all four quarantined premises will continue to undergo tick surveillance.

There are no restrictions on Florida horses with the exception of the additional Canadian requirements. Horses exporting to Canada from the State of Florida must meet the following additional requirements:

- An Import permit (for the Canadian importer)
- The horse(s) are inspected by a veterinarian within fifteen (15) days preceding the date of importation;
- Certification statements on the export health certificate:
 - "The horse(s) have not been on a premises where equine piroplasmosis (clinical or serology) has occurred during the 60 days immediately preceding exportation to Canada, nor has this disease occurred on any adjoining premises during the same period of time."
 - "They must have tested negative using a cELISA test or, where applicable, an alternate test acceptable to CFIA for equine piroplasmosis, during the fifteen (15) days prior to the date of importation into Canada."

Canada has also asked for additional certification for equines from other states, for all certificates issued after Sept. 15, 2008:

"During the previous twenty-one (21) days, the animal(s) in this shipment has/have not been in the state of Florida"

Positive Premises Data							
11/21/08	Premises 1 (Manatee)	Premises 2 (De Soto)	Premises 3 (Polk)	Prem. 4 (Polk)	Prem. 5 (Lake)	Prem. 6 (Dade)	Prem. 7 (Orange)
# of Positive Horses	5	2	6	4	1	1	1
# of Horses on Premises	21	29	22	13	8	11	0
# Positives left on Premises	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

Quarantine Data	
Number of Quarantines Placed	25
Number of Premises Currently Under Quarantine	4
Total Number of Premises Having Horses Test Positive	7
Number of Premises Currently Having Positive Horses	1

November 5, 2008

There are currently 6 premises under state quarantine for having horses test positive for EP, however, there are no positive horses left on any of those premises (See tables below). All 6 premises are awaiting retest for release of quarantine with most due to be retested this month. One premises is expected to be released later this week if all testing is negative, as EP exposure to the premises occurred greater than 60 days ago and no positive tick have been found.

Tick surveillance is continuing and the evidence at this time continues to implicate management practices in the spread of the disease as no foreign ticks or ticks carrying the EP causing organism have been found.

There are no restrictions on Florida horses with the exception of the additional Canadian requirements. Horses exporting to Canada from the State of Florida must meet the following additional requirements:

- An Import permit (for the Canadian importer)
- The horse(s) are inspected by a veterinarian within fifteen (15) days preceding the date of importation;
- Certification statements on the export health certificate:

- "The horse(s) have not been on a premises where equine piroplasmosis (clinical or serology) has occurred during the 60 days immediately preceding exportation to Canada, nor has this disease occurred on any adjoining premises during the same period of time."

- "They must have tested negative using a cELISA test or, where applicable, an alternate test acceptable to CFIA for equine piroplasmosis, during the fifteen (15) days prior to the date of importation into Canada."

Canada has also asked for additional certification for equines from other states, for all certificates issued after Sept.15, 2008:

"During the previous twenty-one (21) days, the animal(s) in this shipment has/have not been in the state of Florida"

Positive Premises Data							
	Premises 1 (Manatee)	Premises 2 (De Soto)	Premises 3 (Polk)	Prem. 4 (Polk)	Prem. 5 (Lake)	Prem. 6 (Dade)	Prem. 7 (Orange)
# of Positive Horses	5	1	6	4	1	1	1
# of Horses on Premises	21	29	22	13	8	11	0
# Positives left on Premises	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Quarantine Data	
Number of Quarantines Placed	25
Number of Premises Currently Under Quarantine	6
Total Number of Premises Having Horses Test Positive	7
Number of Premises Currently Having Positive Horses	0

October 13, 2008

Five additional premises were released from quarantine last Friday. All horses on the 5 premises had initially tested negative for EP and were again negative on recent retesting.

Currently, 6 premises remain under quarantine with only one of those premises still having positive horses. (See tables below)

The investigation is continuing with exposed horses being traced and tick surveillance occurring at affected premises.

There are no restrictions on Florida horses with the exception of the recent modifications to the Canadian requirements. For the specific requirements please see the October 10th update, below.

Positive Premises Data							
	Premises 1 (Manatee)	Premises 2 (De Soto)	Premises 3 (Polk)	Prem. 4 (Polk)	Prem. 5 (Lake)	Prem. 6 (Dade)	Prem. 7 (Orange)
# of Positive Horses	5	1	6	4	1	1	1
# of Horses on Premises	20	30	20	13	8	11	1
# Positives left on Premises	0	0	5	0	0	0	0

Quarantine Data	
Number of Quarantines Placed	25
Number of Premises Currently Under Quarantine	6
Total Number of Premises Having Horses Test Positive	7
Number of Premises Currently Having Positive Horses	1

October 10, 2008

The EP investigation is continuing and it appears that the source of the infection has been determined and the exposed animals are under state quarantine. There have been no new positive animals detected since September 17th and the remaining 5 positive horses are located on one premises.

The transmission of the organism is still believed to have resulted from management practices and not naturally via ticks. Despite extensive tick surveillance, no exotic ticks have been identified. Approximately 50 ticks (*Dermacentor variabilis*), that have been shown to be experimental vectors for the organism, have been tested and found to be negative for EP.

Due to the apparent containment of the EP situation, Canada has now revised their import requirements for horses from Florida. Horses exporting to Canada from the State of Florida

must meet the following additional requirements:

- An Import permit (for the Canadian importer)
- The horse(s) are inspected by a veterinarian within fifteen (15) days preceding the date of importation;
- Certification statements on the export health certificate:
 - "The horse(s) have not been on a premises where equine piroplasmosis (clinical or serology) has occurred during the 60 days immediately preceding exportation to Canada, nor has this disease occurred on any adjoining premises during the same period of time."
 - "They must have tested negative using a cELISA test or, where applicable, an alternate test acceptable to CFIA for equine piroplasmosis, during the fifteen (15) days prior to the date of importation into Canada."

Canada has also asked for additional certification for equines from other states, for all certificates issued after Sept.15, 2008:

"During the previous twenty-one (21) days, the animal(s) in this shipment has/have not been in the state of Florida"

October 1, 2008

Two additional premises have been released from quarantine as all horses have tested negative and have not been exposed to EP, within the past 60 days. Currently, 11 premises remain under quarantine with only one of those premises still having positive horses. (See tables below)

The State Veterinarian's Office is continuing to investigate the EP situation in Florida by tracing horses that may have been exposed to the disease and coordinating tick surveillance. The evidence at this time continues to implicate management practices in the spread of the disease as no foreign ticks or ticks carrying the EP causing organism have been found.

With the exception of the Canadian ban on Florida horses, there are no restrictions on Florida horses at this time. The State Veterinarian's Office is continuing to work with the United States Department of Agriculture in an effort to have the Canadian restrictions reduced or lifted.

Positive Premises Data							
	Premises 1 (Manatee)	Premises 2 (De Soto)	Premises 3 (Polk)	Prem. 4 (Polk)	Prem. 5 (Lake)	Prem. 6 (Dade)	Prem. 7 (Orange)
# of Positive Horses	5	1	6	4	1	1	1

# of Horses on Premises	20	30	20	13	8	11	1
# Positives left on Premises	0	0	5	0	0	0	0

Quarantine Data	
Number of Quarantines Placed	25
Number of Premises Currently Under Quarantine	11
Total Number of Premises Having Horses Test Positive	7
Number of Premises Currently Having Positive Horses	1

September 24, 2008

There are currently 13 premises under state quarantine with only one farm still having positive horses on the premises. This is down from 25 quarantines and 7 farms having positive horses (See tables below). Premises are being released from quarantine only after negative testing and an extended time since exposure to the disease.

All the positive cases of EP have been directly linked to what is believed to be 2 horses that entered Florida from Mexico. The investigation has resulted in extensive tracing of animals, which led to the quarantining of the 25 premises and approximately 200 horses being tested for EP.

The evidence still indicates that transmission of the disease has been by management practices and not by a natural tick vector. Tick surveillance is ongoing but no exotic ticks have been found and all domestic ticks thought to be potential vectors for the disease have tested negative for the organism causing EP.

Positive Premises Data							
	Premises 1 (Manatee)	Premises 2 (De Soto)	Premises 3 (Polk)	Prem. 4 (Polk)	Prem. 5 (Lake)	Prem. 6 (Dade)	Prem. 7 (Orange)
# of Positive Horses	5	1	6	4	1	1	1
# of Horses on Premises	20	30	20	13	8	11	1
# Positives left on Premises	0	0	6	0	0	0	0

Quarantine Data	
Number of Quarantines Placed	25
Number of Premises Currently Under Quarantine	13
Total Number of Premises Having Positive Horses	7
Number of Premises Currently Having Positive Horses	1

September 19, 2008

A total of 18 premises are currently under state quarantine due to exposure to EP. Since the investigation began 25 premises have been quarantined, with approximately 200 horses being tested for the disease. Seven of the 25 premises have been released from quarantine as a result of negative testing and an extended time since exposure to the disease.

During the investigation this week no additional premises have had horses test positive, leaving the current number of positive premises at 6. Only 3 of the quarantined premises have positive horses still residing on the farm. (See the informational tables below for details)

Positive Premises Data						
	Premises 1 (Manatee)	Premises 2 (De Soto)	Premises 3 (Polk)	Prem. 4 (Polk)	Prem. 5 (Lake)	Prem. 6 (Dade)
# of Positive Horses	5	1	6	4	1	1
# of Horses on Premises	20	30	20	13	8	11
# Positives left on Premises	0	0	5	4	0	1

Quarantine Data	
Number of Quarantines Placed	25
Number of Premises Currently Under Quarantine	18
Total Number of Premises Having Positive Horses	6
Number of Premises Currently Having Positive Horses	3

The investigation is continuing and animals are still being traced and tested. Tick surveillance is continuing as well. There have been no exotic ticks found and all testing on ticks collected has been negative for EP.

There are no state restrictions placed on Florida horses at this time and the only country that has placed restrictions on Florida horses is Canada, which will not accept any horse that has been in Florida within the past 21 days. The State Veterinarian's Office is continuing to work with the United States Department of Agriculture in an effort to have the Canadian restrictions reduced or lifted.

September 16, 2008

Four additional premises have been released from quarantine as all horses on those premises have tested negative for EP. There are currently 15 premises still under quarantine with 5 of those premises having at least one horse testing positive for EP.

The State Veterinarian's Office is continuing to investigate the EP situation in Florida by tracing horses that may have been exposed to the disease and coordinating tick surveillance. The evidence at this time continues to implicate management practices in the spread of the disease as no foreign ticks or ticks carrying the EP causing organism have been found.

With the exception of the Canadian ban on Florida horses, there are no restrictions on Florida horses at this time. The State Veterinarian's Office is continuing to work with the United States Department of Agriculture in an effort to have the Canadian restrictions reduced or lifted.

September 12, 2008

There are currently 19 premises under state quarantine due to the ongoing EP investigation. A total of 22 premises had been quarantined but 3 premises have been released due to negative testing on all horses. Of the 19 premises now quarantined 5 have a total of 15 horses that have tested positive for EP. This is down from 6 premises with 20 positives as one of the quarantined premises, in Manatee County, has surrendered 5 positive horses to state officials.

Spread of the disease is currently believed to be due to management practices and not via tick transmission. Thus far Tick surveillance has found no exotic ticks and none of the domestic ticks tested so far have been positive for the EP organism.

There are no state restrictions on Florida horses; however, Canadian officials notified the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) this week that they will no longer accept horses originating in Florida. The state veterinarian's office is working with the USDA to try to have these restrictions reduced or lifted.

September 8, 2008

Over the weekend two additional premises were identified as being exposed to EP via horse movement. The premises, located in Dade and Lake Counties, were quarantined and each premises had one horse that tested positive for EP.

These cases bring the total number of quarantined premises to 19 and the number of horses testing positive to 20, on 6 of the quarantined premises. All of the horses testing positive are closely linked via movement and common premises. Because there is a close association between all 20 positive horses, the spread of the disease is believed to be due to management practices that result in the transfer of whole blood between horses.

Tick trapping and surveillance is ongoing. No foreign ticks have been found and no domestic ticks have tested positive for the organism that causes EP.

September 5, 2008

There are now 18 premises under quarantine with approximately 160 horses tested for EP. All of the positive premises have been directly linked together via movement of one or more of the positive horses. Four of the quarantined premises are expected to be released soon as exposure to EP occurred more than 60 days ago and all testing for EP has been negative.

Out of the 160 horses tested 18 have been positive on 4 of the quarantined premises. Five of the positive horses have been either humanely euthanized or sent to the National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames Iowa.

The current evidence indicates that ticks have not played a role in the spread of the disease. Tick surveillance is continuing with more than 60 ticks having been collected from positive or surrounding premises. Only 3 of the trapped ticks are species that have been shown experimentally to be a possible transmitter of the disease and all are domestic to the United States.

September 3, 2008

The EP investigation is continuing and includes 17 quarantined premises with over 130 animals tested. Of the 17 quarantined premises, 3 have had a total of 10 horses that have tested positive for EP. The 3 positive premises have been directly linked via movement of one or more of the positive horses.

The investigation will likely result in additional premises being placed under quarantine as horses that have had contact with a positive horse are being traced to their current location and tested. Several of the currently quarantined premises are expected to be released soon as the investigation has determined that no exposure to a positive horse had occurred, no horses have tested positive on the premises and no ticks capable of spreading the disease have been found.

Based on the current evidence there is no indication that ticks have played a role in the spread of the disease. To ensure that there are no infected ticks and no tick species likely to transmit the disease in Florida, tick surveillance is being conducted in association with the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Diseases Study, who has extensive experience in environmental tick collection.

August 29, 2008

The EP investigation has revealed two additional test positive horses on a third premises located in Polk County. The two additional cases bring the total number of test positive horses to eight, on three separate premises. All of the positive horses have been closely linked to the initial positive premise, in Manatee County.

The investigation has resulted in the quarantine of twelve premises and testing of more than 100 horses. The investigation is continuing and additional quarantines and testing are likely to occur.

There has been no evidence of natural transmission of the organism by ticks. Tick surveillance is continuing in an effort to ensure that there are no infected ticks and no tick species likely to transmit the disease in Florida.

August 28, 2008

The EP investigation is continuing with additional premises quarantined and horses tested. During the investigation the State Veterinarian's Office has quarantined 11 premises and tested over 90 horses for EP. Only 2 premises have had horses test positive for the disease. One of the premises, in Manatee County, where the first clinical horse originated, had 4 barn

mates test positive for the disease. The only other quarantined premises, located in Desoto County, had one horse test positive which had a direct link to the Manatee County premises.

Additional premises are being investigated as information becomes available and further testing of horses will occur should there be any evidence of contact that could spread the EP organism. Because the organism causing EP is only spread via specific ticks or contaminated needles, tick trapping and surveillance is continuing as well. Currently there have been no ticks found which are thought to have the ability to spread the disease.

August 25, 2008

Several adjacent and contact premises, linked to the initial positive premises in Manatee County, have been investigated. Of the 30 additional horses tested late last week only one horse from a contact premises tested positive for EP. No additional ticks have been discovered on any of the horses tested.

State officials are working with the USDA to continue the investigation. Work is being carried out to identify additional horses or premises that may have been in contact with or associated with a positive horse or premises. In addition, representatives of the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Diseases Study are assisting with tick surveillance on affected premises.

August 21, 2008

The Florida State Veterinarian's Office is continuing to investigate the Equine Piroplasmosis (EP) case in Manatee County. While tropical storm Faye delayed investigation efforts earlier in the week additional samples and tick inspections were performed yesterday. Further horse testing and tick surveillance will continue over the weekend.

Currently the only premises with evidence of EP is the one index premise in Manatee County. There have been no additional clinical cases reported at this time.

While no states have restricted movement of Florida horses, Canada has advised the United States Department of Agriculture they will not accept horses originating from Manatee County, effective immediately. This ban will stay in effect until further notice.

August 18, 2008

Further testing on samples from horses on the index premises in Manatee County, have indicated that four additional horses on the premises are infected with the organism that causes Equine Piroplasmosis (EP). The four positive horses were stabled in the barn with the initial clinical horse. All other horses on the premises, which are managed separately from the horses in the barn, were negative on testing. In addition, 20 ticks found at the premises were identified as the Gulf Coast tick (*Amblyomma maculatum*), which has not been shown to transmit the disease between horses.

The preliminary investigation indicates that the transmission on the index premises may have been caused by use of common needles between horses and not spread naturally by a tick vector. The Department is continuing its investigation including additional horse and tick surveillance of the area. As a precaution, 3 adjacent premises and 1 contact premises have been placed under quarantine pending further sample collection and testing.

August 15, 2008

Department Press Release

08-15-2008

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Bronson Announces Detection Of Horse Disease

TALLAHASSEE –Florida Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner Charles H. Bronson announced today that a Manatee County horse has been diagnosed with Equine Piroplasmosis (EP) - an animal disease that the U.S. has been considered free of since 1988.

Blood and tissue testing of a seven-year-old gelding that had been euthanized after a three-week illness confirmed the presence of the disease in the animal.

State officials immediately quarantined the premises in which the horse resided, as well as two adjacent properties containing horses pending a determination of their status.

An ongoing investigation is being conducted by the State Veterinarian's Office to determine the source of the disease and whether it has spread beyond the immediate area where the infected animal was housed.

EP

Equine Piroplasmosis (EP) is a blood-borne parasitic disease primarily transmitted to horses by ticks or contaminated needles. The disease was eradicated from Florida in the 1980's, and the tick species believed to transmit EP in other countries have not been identified in Florida in many years. This disease is not directly contagious from one horse to another but requires direct blood transfer. Human infection with equine piroplasmosis is extremely rare.

Acutely affected horses can have depression, fever, anemia (decreased red blood cells) jaundiced (yellow) mucous membranes and low platelet counts. EP can also cause horses to have roughened hair coats, constipation, and colic. In its milder form, the disease causes horses to appear weak and show lack of appetite. Some horses become chronic carriers of the disease.

ADVICE TO VETS AND HORSEOWNERS

Veterinarians, horse owners, and others in the equine industry in Florida are asked to monitor their horses carefully and contact their veterinarian if they suspect this disease. Because it is a disease that the U.S. has been free of for two decades, suspected cases must be reported to the Office of the State Veterinarian by law.

With the exception of the quarantined premises, there are no EP movement restrictions on horses within Florida or between Florida and other states. Horses entering Florida from other countries with Equine Piroplasmosis will continue to be tested prior to and following entry according to the current rule.

WHAT HORSEOWNERS SHOULD DO

1. Monitor your horse for the presence of ticks. Use commercially available topical products labeled for ticks if your horse is in an area where tick infestation is a problem. Most of these products are synthetic pyrethrins. Include an avermectin product in your deworming program to provide systemic treatment for ticks. Ask your veterinarian if you are unsure.
2. If you find large numbers of ticks or suspect piroplasmosis, please contact your veterinarian.
3. Do not share needles between animals during the administration of any medication or vaccinations. EP and other diseases can be spread by the introduction of blood cells from an infected animal into an uninfected animal during routine administration of injectable medications.
4. Continue your normal equine activities.

Additional updates and information will be posted to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Animal Industry web site at: <http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/ai/>.

