



## NEWS RELEASE

Texas Animal Health Commission  
"Serving Texas Animal Agriculture Since 1893"  
Dee Ellis, DVM, MPA • Executive Director

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 3, 2014

### **Texas Animal Health Commission to Test Equine in Brooks County for Piroplasmosis**

AUSTIN – The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) has designated Brooks County as a high risk county for exposure to Equine Piroplasmosis (Piroplasmosis or Piro) and will begin testing equine (horses, donkeys, mules, ponies and zebras) in Brooks County on Friday, November 14, 2014.

An informational public meeting will be held on Thursday, November 13, 2014, at 6 pm at the Brooks County Courthouse Annex located at 408 West Travis Street, Falfurrias, Texas 78355. Brooks County equine owners and veterinarians are encouraged to attend the public meeting. TAHC veterinarians will provide key information regarding the disease and testing.

Equine Piroplasmosis is a blood-borne protozoal disease that affects all equine. Piroplasmosis can be transmitted from positive equine to negative equine by blood transfer from dirty instruments or insect carriers, such as ticks. Piro is not transmissible to humans.

High risk areas were established for Kleberg and Kenedy counties in 2013, where subsequent testing of resident equine found 28 animals tested positive and were diagnosed with Piroplasmosis. A number of tick species are capable of transmitting the disease and at least one species, *Amblyomma cajennense*, is located in Brooks County. Therefore Brooks County, having the disease vector and being adjacent to Kleberg and Kenedy counties, is considered to be at high risk for Piroplasmosis and designated for testing.

"Equine Piroplasmosis is considered a foreign animal disease in the U.S., however, new cases continue to be discovered in South Texas," Dr. Dee Ellis, State Veterinarian, said. "The TAHC is asking for the support of equine owners and veterinarians to make this testing effort a success and help assure the health of the equine population."

Brooks County equine owners and veterinary practitioners may contact the TAHC Region 5 Office at 1-361-358-3234 with questions or to schedule testing. For more information on Piroplasmosis visit [www.tahc.state.tx.us/animal\\_health/equine/piro.html](http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/animal_health/equine/piro.html).

Founded in 1893, the Texas Animal Health Commission works to protect the health of all Texas livestock, including: cattle, swine, poultry, sheep, goats, equine animals, and exotic livestock.

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