



# NEWS RELEASE

Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC)

*"Serving Texas Animal Agriculture Since 1893"*

Dee Ellis, DVM, MPA • Executive Director

Austin, Texas • (800) 550-8242 [www.tahc.texas.gov](http://www.tahc.texas.gov)

For more information contact the Communications Director at 1-512-719-0710 or at [bonnie.ramirez@tahc.texas.gov](mailto:bonnie.ramirez@tahc.texas.gov)



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 29, 2015

## **Eastern Equine Encephalitis Cases Reported in Texas** *TAHC Reminds Equine Owners to Consult with Veterinarian Regarding Vaccinations*

AUSTIN – The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) recently received confirmation from the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL) of Texas horses testing positive for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). The infected horses are located in: Newton, Orange, Liberty, Jasper and Jefferson counties. To date, there are a total of five positive EEE cases in Texas.

TAHC officials remind equine owners to consult with their private veterinary practitioner regarding vaccinating their horses against mosquito-borne illnesses such as Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), Western Equine Encephalitis (WEE), Venezuelan Equine Encephalitis (VEE), and West Nile Virus.

Eastern equine encephalomyelitis (EEE) is a mosquito-borne viral disease of all equine species. Infected horses may suddenly die or show progressive central nervous system disorders. Symptoms may include unsteadiness, erratic behavior and a marked loss of coordination. The death rate for animals infected with EEE is 75-100%.

Western equine encephalomyelitis (WEE) is a viral disease that mainly affects horses; mosquitoes primarily transmit this disease. Similar to EEE, WEE is characterized by central nervous system dysfunction. About 20 to 50% of horses infected with WEE die.

Venezuelan equine encephalomyelitis (VEE) is a viral disease that affects horses and causes illness in humans. It has not been seen in the United States for many years (however, a recent outbreak of VEE occurred in Mexico). Mosquitoes most often transmit the disease after the insects have acquired the virus from birds and rodents. Humans also are susceptible when bitten by an infected mosquito, but direct horse-to-horse or horse-to-human transmission is very rare. Symptoms in horses vary widely, but all result from the degeneration of the brain. Early signs include fever, depression and appetite loss. The mortality rate for VEE is 40 to 80%.

“Vaccines are available for neurologic diseases such as EEE and WEE. As part of routine equine health care, we strongly recommend that equine owners consult with their local veterinarian to discuss an appropriate vaccination program to protect their horses against mosquito-borne diseases such as these,” said Dr. Andy Schwartz, TAHC Assistant Executive Director.

For more information on mosquito borne diseases visit: <http://www.aaep.org/info/horse-health?publication=944>

For information on TVMDL’s equine neurologic disease testing, visit [www.tvmdl.tamu.edu](http://www.tvmdl.tamu.edu) or call 888-646-5623.

*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.*

###