



For Immediate Release  
May 22, 2020

## Vesicular Stomatitis Virus in Texas

### Situational Update #3

AUSTIN, TX – Since May 8, 2020, the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) has received 4 new reports of vesicular stomatitis virus (VSV) in Texas equine and cattle.

#### Confirmations since the last VSV situational update (May 8, 2020):

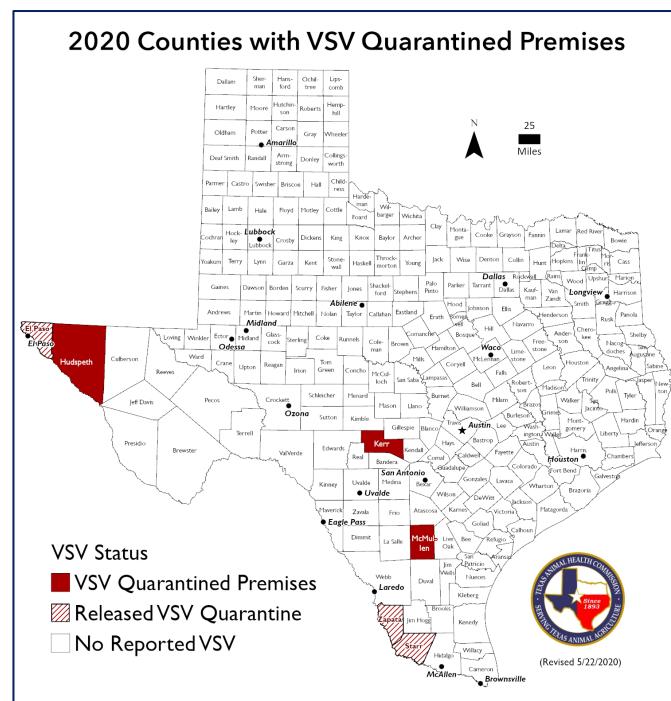
- Hudspeth County 1 new confirmed positive horse premises
- Kerr County 1 new confirmed positive horse premises
- McMullen County 1 new confirmed positive cattle premises
- Zapata County 1 new confirmed positive horse premises

The VSV-infected animals have been isolated on their individual premises and are being monitored by their veterinarians. The four premises will remain under TAHC quarantine until 14 days from the onset of lesions in the last affected animal on each premises.

VSV is a viral disease that primarily affects horses and cattle and occasionally swine, sheep, goats, llamas and alpacas. VSV can cause blisters and sores in the mouth and on the tongue, muzzle, teats or hooves of susceptible animals. Additional signs of infection include fever, drooling or frothing at the mouth, reluctance to eat, and lameness or laminitis if lesions develop around the coronary band. Lesions usually will heal in two or three weeks, and most animals recover with supportive care by a veterinarian.

VSV is spread by direct contact with infected animals or spread by insect vectors like black flies, sand flies and biting midges. Since the VSV infected cattle have not recently traveled, this could indicate that VSV-infected insects are the likely source of infection on these premises.

"If you suspect your animals have VSV, contact your private veterinarian immediately," said Dr. Andy Schwartz, State Veterinarian and TAHC Executive Director. "VSV outbreaks cause concern because signs can mimic those of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), a highly contagious and dangerous foreign animal disease. A quick laboratory test can confirm it is VSV and help your veterinarian treat your livestock appropriately."



2020 Texas VSV Summary		
Texas County	Confirmed Positive Premises	Suspect Premises
El Paso	1	0
Hudspeth	1	0
Kerr	1	0
McMullen*	1	0
Starr *	4	0
Zapata *	2	0

\* Bovine have been confirmed with VSV in these counties.  
Premises = a case; a location



## Outbreak Summary

The United States 2020 VSV outbreak began on April 13, 2020, when NVSL confirmed the first VSV-positive premises in New Mexico. Since that time, VSV has been confirmed in Arizona and Texas. The first case of VSV in Texas was confirmed in an El Paso County horse. Since that time, the virus has been confirmed in Kerr, Hudspeth, McMullen, Starr, and Zapata counties. For VSV history and past TAHC updates [click here](#).

## Prevention

Even with the best defensive measures, VSV can infect a herd. However, these tips may help protect livestock:

- Control biting flies (fly spray, fly traps, maintaining clean pens, etc.).
- Keep equine animals stalled or under a roof to reduce exposure to flies.
- Feed and water stock from their individual buckets.
- Do not visit a ranch that's under quarantine for VSV. Wait until the animals have healed.
- Restrict nose-to-nose contact between horses and cattle from other premises.
- Clean and disinfect tack and equipment between uses.

## If You Suspect Infection

1. Call your private veterinarian immediately.
2. Separate affected horse(s) or cattle from all healthy animals on the property.
3. Handle all healthy animals before sick animals. After handling sick animals make sure to wash and disinfect your hands and boots, if possible, change and wash your clothes as well.

Some states and other countries may restrict movement of, or impose additional requirements for Texas equine, cattle, or other susceptible animals entering their jurisdiction because of the confirmed cases of VSV. Before moving livestock, contact the [state of destination](#) for entry requirements. For international export information, contact the USDA, Veterinary Services Austin office at (301) 851-3300 option 2.

The TAHC will send out updates upon receiving new VSV confirmations. [Click here](#) to sign up for the equine email list to receive the VSV updates to your inbox. All cases will be reported to the Equine Disease Communication Center. To view the USDA 2020 VSV situation reports [click here](#).

## Veterinary Guidance

If you suspect a client's animal is infected with VSV, contact your [TAHC Region Office](#) for procedures, required paperwork and important sample submission information.

For more information about VSV and preventative measures, visit the links below:

- TAHC Fact Sheet: [https://www.tahc.texas.gov/news/brochures/TAHCFactsheet\\_VesicularStomatitis.pdf](https://www.tahc.texas.gov/news/brochures/TAHCFactsheet_VesicularStomatitis.pdf)
- Equine Biosecurity Guidance:  
[https://www.tahc.texas.gov/news/brochures/TAHCBrochure\\_BiosecurityEquine.pdf](https://www.tahc.texas.gov/news/brochures/TAHCBrochure_BiosecurityEquine.pdf)
- USDA VSV Webpage: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/equine/vsv-vesicular-stomatitis>

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*The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) was established in 1893 as the Livestock Sanitary Commission and charged with protecting the state's domestic animals "from all contagious or infectious diseases of a malignant character." TAHC remains true to this charge while evolving with the times to protect the health and marketability of all Texas livestock and poultry. Learn more about the TAHC by visiting [www.tahc.texas.gov](http://www.tahc.texas.gov).*