



For Immediate Release
April 20, 2022

Equine Piroplasmosis Confirmed in a Lubbock County Horse

AUSTIN, TX – The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) received confirmation of equine piroplasmosis (EP) in a Lubbock County Quarter Horse. This is the first confirmed case of EP in Texas this year.

The horse was confirmed positive after testing was performed to meet regulatory requirements. The premises has been quarantined and will not be released until the TAHC's requirements are met.

TAHC staff are working closely with the owner and local veterinarian to implement biosecurity measures, determine the likely source of the disease, and assess any potential for spread.

“Equine Piroplasmosis is a blood-borne protozoal disease that is transmitted through blood-to-blood contact, not through close proximity or direct contact,” said Dr. Andy Schwartz, TAHC Executive Director and State Veterinarian. “The virus can be transmitted from an infected equine to an uninfected equine by certain ticks. However, the majority of cases found within the United States have been linked to the use of contaminated medical equipment (needles, syringes, IV sets, tattooing equipment, other medical tools) and/or blood products.”

Equine Piroplasmosis affects horses, donkeys, mules, and zebras. Clinical signs are often non-specific and can include fever, reduced/lack of appetite, anemia (loss/destruction of red blood cells), jaundice (yellow discoloration of mucous membranes), exercise intolerance/weakness, weight loss, swollen abdomen, labored breathing, colic, and sudden death.

To prevent disease spread, never reuse needles, syringes or IV sets. Use only new, clean needles when injecting medicines, and only licensed and approved blood products. Blood transfusions should be performed only by licensed veterinarians using donor horses negative for equine piroplasmosis and other blood-borne infections like equine infectious anemia (EIA). To reduce tick exposure, keep pastures mowed, remove brush and weeds, and use topical insecticides such as pyrethroid or permethrin products. There are no vaccines available for EP prevention.

For more information on EP please visit https://www.tahc.texas.gov/animal_health/equine/#piro.

The equine industry is encouraged to obtain the latest information on equine disease events across the country on the Equine Disease Communication Center (EDCC) website, <http://www.equinediseasecc.org/alerts/outbreaks>. Subsequent Texas EP cases will be posted on the EDCC.

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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.