



**For Immediate Release**

Monday, May 16, 2011

## Colorado State University Announces Precautions against Equine Herpesvirus, Canceled Events

**FORT COLLINS** - Colorado State University's Veterinary Teaching Hospital is restricting non-emergency equine and camelid veterinary appointments, beginning immediately, as a precaution to prevent exposing the facilities, horses and camelids to the equine herpesvirus type 1. This precaution, along with added infectious disease prevention biosafety strategies, is being implemented to keep the VTH equine hospital main facility and equine and camelid clients free from infection. This precaution is designed to prevent horses from multiple locations from coming into contact with each other, based on concerns about the current widespread outbreak. The VTH's main equine hospital is not housing any equine cases suspected to have been exposed to equine herpesvirus – this is merely a precaution to protect the facility and client horses. As an added precaution, the main equine hospital also has implemented high levels of biosafety practices to protect the grounds and client horses.

CSU's Veterinary Teaching Hospital routinely screens all client horses for signs of or exposure to any infectious disease. Any potential cases of infectious disease are treated in a separate isolation hospital unit specifically designed for treating infectious disease cases, such as equine herpesvirus 1 cases. The unit is not connected to the main hospital and is currently being used to house horses that may have been exposed to the virus.

Equine unit personnel are contacting clients with non-emergency appointments in the hospital and through the ambulatory unit to reschedule those visits. The VTH and ambulatory equine unit will continue to accept emergency cases. Hospital leadership will monitor the outbreak and reassess when it is appropriate to accept non-emergency appointments on an ongoing basis.

The precautions have been put in place based on best practices because of the current widespread outbreak of equine herpesvirus type 1 and the aggressive nature of this strain of illness. The current outbreak impacts most of the Western United States and Canada.

Colorado State University veterinarians are recommending that all horse owners restrict transportation of their horses and restrict access to their horses and grounds until the current

outbreak subsides. Horse owners also are advised to consult with their veterinarian about EHV1 biosecurity and health concerns.

Anyone with questions about appointments and available veterinary care at the Colorado State Veterinary Teaching Hospital should call (970) 297-5000.

Information about Colorado-specific travel recommendations, quarantines and outbreak epidemiology should be obtained through the Colorado Department of Agriculture. More information from the Department of Agriculture is available at <http://www.colorado.gov/ag>.

### **CSU Equine Science Programs Canceled as Precaution**

The Colorado State University Equine Sciences Center has temporarily closed its doors to horses entering or leaving the property on CSU's Foothills Campus to prevent risk of spreading the equine herpesvirus. The length of the restriction is not known and will depend on the course of the current outbreak. The precaution means that two riding clinics scheduled at the B.W. Pickett Equine Center in May have been cancelled.

The cancelled events are:

- A two-day jumping clinic with grand prix show jumper and Olympic medalist Greg Best, which had been scheduled May 17-18;
- A two-day Western reining clinic with world champion Todd Crawford, which had been scheduled May 21-22.

About 50 riders and their horses were expected to participate in the two events at the Equine Center.

Officials have not yet determined whether popular annual horse camps for young riders, organized by equine-sciences faculty, will go ahead as planned at the Equine Center. The camps are currently scheduled June 13-18 and June 19-24. For information about the camps, participants may contact Megan Grieve, Equine Sciences Program coordinator, at (970) 491-8373.

Restricting movement of horses onto the CSU property is a protective precaution for all of these animals.

Equine herpesvirus is a neurological variation of the herpes virus; it is spread through the air and through contact with infected horses. Horses that acquire the virus may display symptoms including weakness and loss of balance. Some severely infected animals ultimately become unable to stand and must be euthanized.

No horses owned by CSU have been exposed during the first wave of the current virus outbreak.

Development of potential secondary cases elsewhere in Colorado will help university officials determine whether to lift restrictions on horses coming to or leaving CSU property. Officials hope that such restrictions, as well as quarantines enforced by state veterinarians, will stop the outbreak so that horse activities may resume.