

Update: West Nile Virus

Signs of West Nile Virus:

- Stumbling
- Staggering
- Wobbling
- Weakness
- Muscle Twitching
- Inability to stand

PEH Recommendations:

- Make sure your horse or horses are **CURRENT** on their West Nile vaccinations
- Look for early signs your horse might be affected
- Contact your veterinarian *early* with any health concerns
- Keep standing water to a minimum in order to reduce mosquito populations



The return of West Nile Virus to California this year is renewing calls for horse owners to make sure their animals are vaccinated. So far in 2010, four horses have been diagnosed with the disease, in Sacramento, San Joaquin and Madera counties. All of the horses were either unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated.

“Outbreaks of West Nile virus are still a risk for horses,” said California State Veterinarian Dr. Richard Breitmeyer. “Horse owners should contact their veterinarians as soon as possible to ensure vaccination status is current. If people get the necessary shots for their horses now, the animals will have optimal protection against the disease.”

Signs of West Nile virus include stumbling, staggering, wobbling, weakness, muscle twitching and inability to stand. Horses contract the disease from carrier mosquitoes and are not contagious to other horses or people. Not every horse exposed to the virus will die.

Vaccination for West Nile virus is recommended as a core vaccine and is an essential standard of care for all horses in North America according to the American Association of Equine Practitioners. There are three licensed vaccines currently available for horse owners. For more information on the West Nile Virus and vaccination guidelines visit www.aaep.org/wnv.htm.

CDFA is cooperating with the California Department of Public Health to detect and respond to the disease in California. Horses provide an additional sentinel for disease detection. For more information, click on http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/WNV_Info.html
Information courtesy of www.thecalifornian.com

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