

From: Dan Stacey, Chairman of Health for the BCYF,

Dear Equine Exhibitor's

As many of you may have already heard there have been three confirmed cases of Strangles here in Berrien County. I have been in contact with each horse owner and their veterinarian that have been infected. Each of these families has been extremely pro-active with the medical treatment of these horses and each of these horses has remained on their respected farms. The veterinarian in charge of the medical treatment of these horses is very pleased with the results and each will make a full healthy recovery.

Many of you already know that Strangles is a highly contagious. Each horse owner should consider the following steps to help reduce the possibility of infection and limit the potential spread to other horses.

1) Familiarize yourself with the symptoms of Strangles because in its earliest stages it can resemble any of the equine upper respiratory diseases. The symptoms of Strangles are pus draining from one or both nostrils, fever, swelling and abscesses under the chin along with soft coughing.

2) Consider vaccination. Contact your veterinarian about their recommendations but, most consider the intra nasal product - Pinnacle IN - to be the safest and most effective. An initial dose is squirted up the nose and then repeated in 2-3 weeks and then repeated yearly thereafter.

3) In situations when an exposure to the Strangles bacteria is suspected or worried about, antibiotics can be used preventatively following exposure. An appropriate antibiotic and dosage can be discussed with your veterinarian.

There are several web sites that can provide you with additional details of not only this disease but, any diseases that a horse owner may have questions on. Attached are two great web sites that can provide you details on Strangles. This is from the American Association of Equine Practitioners website. More great information on the post-infection testing and control of Strep equine. (Strangles)

http://www.aaep.org/pdfs/control_guidelines/Streptococcus%20equi%20var.pdf

Attached are 13 points of interest about how Strangles is spread and ways to help prevent this disease from spreading.

1. A hose can carry bacteria from one bucket to another when you dunk the end in each bucket to fill.
2. *S. equine* can survive for three to four weeks in water in tanks contaminated by discharges.
3. Bacteria shielded in pus can live longer than if just contained in a drop of clear watery fluid from the horse's nose.
4. In wintertime, pus and contaminated discharges that freeze can persist to infect others when the ground thaws.
5. *S. equine* lives three days in the soil, seven days on a fence post, and 30-40 days in a water trough.
6. At events, if possible, it is best to leave your horse by your trailer rather than using shared

stalls that might be contaminated.

7. Water buckets should not be shared at horse shows.

8. Some horses that continue to shed *S. equine* past 30 days might clear infections on their own, but it is possible for a horse to shed for weeks, months, or years.

9. Ask owners of visiting or new resident horses about the strangles status of these horses and consider screening for shedding, especially if there is a history of strangles.

10. Contaminated pastures should be empty for at least a month.

11. Water tanks should be cleaned/disinfected daily during an outbreak.

12. When possible, assign specific personnel to handle only the sick animals. Clean hands thoroughly after handling each horse.

13. Work with sick animals last if you are handling healthy *and* sick horses.

13. Supply disposable coveralls and foot covers or rubber boots that are to be worn only when in contact with sick horses, and arrange for specific changing areas for putting on protective clothing. --*Nancy S. Loving, DVM*

Let's make sure that all of you have the proper vaccinations that are required for the BCYF and they are done in a timely manner. If you had your horse vaccinated in the early part of this year you may want to have them boosted just to be pro-active. As always please check with your veterinarian with any questions that you may have.

See you all at the Fair,
Dan Stacey

