

## Are Your Horses Safe at the Fair?

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The Equine Herpes virus is making a return, and this time, it's bringing a more deadly strain with it. Multiple shows across the state have already been cancelled, and there are ~~several~~ <sup>at least two</sup> instances of fatalities already. Event managers fear the worst, and you should be concerned, too. To prevent these catastrophes, we need to know what we are up against, understand how to prevent it, and figure out when to call it quits. I'm going to tell you ~~everything~~ <sup>what</sup> you need to know about this virus and how you can avoid a disaster.

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subject I attended a conference held by Carrie Hammer, the Associate Professor of Equine Sciences at NDSU. She spoke at great length about the diseases themselves, their characteristics, and ~~prevention~~ <sup>preventive</sup> measures. She talked about a lot of the ways that this virus can be prevented and treated. What she did not discuss in detail is when to consider refusing to send your horse to an event. This is something that I will <sup>that here,</sup> address in this article.

First, we need to develop an understanding about the virus. In my opinion, understanding the virus is the most important part of knowing how to stop it. There are two types of equine herpes: respiratory and neurologic. According to Hammer, respiratory herpes is found in horses ~~who~~ <sup>that</sup> may be sneezing or have fever-like symptoms. This strain is more common, but much less serious, killing ~~under~~ <sup>less than</sup> 1% <sup>Percent</sup> of horses affected by it. The neurologic strain, however, can have up to a 50% <sup>Percent</sup> mortality rate. Equine herpes can be spread by airborne droplets or contaminated equipment. These viruses can both live for ~~up to~~ <sup>seven</sup> days without a host, and up to 30 days with perfect conditions.

<sup>preventive</sup>  
So what are some ~~preventative~~ <sup>preventive</sup> measures that can be taken? I believe that the first and certainly most important step is to vaccinate your animals. There are multiple types of vaccines that

when taken yearly can stop the worry of herpes altogether. Just make sure to give this vaccine at least ~~2~~ <sup>two</sup> weeks to settle in before taking your horse to an event.

Another measure that can and should be taken is to sterilize all of your equipment before and after events. If your horse has herpes and you are unaware, you may drastically ~~reduce~~ <sup>increase</sup> the chance that it spreads to others. If any of your equipment is contaminated while participating at an event, you can reduce the chances that your horse contracts it back home. <sup>if you don't share your tack with others</sup> This virus is very weak and doesn't take a lot of work to eliminate. All you need to do to sterilize your equipment is use a diluted bleach solution to clean everything that your horse may have come in contact with.

The third preventative measure is to understand when to call it quits. If you believe that your horse may show signs of equine herpes, please, don't take your horse to a show. This disease is harmful and in some cases, deadly, and can spread very rapidly in close-quarter events. Also, if you have heard any rumors of horses carrying this virus near you, consider keeping your horse at home. Some events become completely cancelled <sup>ed</sup> due to these rumors, but make sure to do your own research even if they don't shut down themselves.

Keeping your horse safe should be your number one priority. Get your animals vaccinated if at all possible. This is the number one way to prevent the contraction and spread of viruses. If your horse is showing any symptoms of equine herpes, take it to the vet immediately to find ways to treat it, and refrain from bringing it to public events where it can be spread. This virus is common, present in our area, spreading rapidly, and dangerous. If you are at all concerned that an event may be too much of a risk, then <sup>err</sup> ~~err~~ on the side of caution. <sup>new paragraph</sup> You can contact your area vet to find out if there has been an outbreak near you, and you can direct any questions you have to ~~Carrie~~ Hammer by email at [carrie.hammer@ndsu.edu](mailto:carrie.hammer@ndsu.edu). This "neigh" be the best way to keep your horse happy and healthy for years to come.

Strongly expressed opinions