



The WeCAHN Equine Network held a quarterly videoconference meeting on December 4th, 2025. The network members discussed the animal health events from July to September. Veterinary practitioners, diagnosticians, veterinary college faculty, researchers, and industry representatives attended the meeting. Data were synthesized from clinical impression surveys completed by practitioners and laboratory submissions from Prairie Diagnostic Services (PDS), Manitoba Veterinary Diagnostic Services (VDS), and the University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine Diagnostic Services Unit (UCVM DSU).

2) Interesting Cases

Case study: Stallion with breeding problems

A 17-year-old stallion stopped producing sperm despite previous successful breeding. He showed normal behavior but dismounted before ejaculating. Diagnostics revealed cystic structures in the reproductive tract, likely causing discomfort and sperm retention. Advanced reproductive techniques may be considered in the future.

Case study: Gelding with weight loss and masses

A 23-year-old gelding developed weight loss, fever, and scrotal masses. Laboratory and post-mortem tests revealed widespread lymphosarcoma, a type of multiorgan cancer that can go undiagnosed in horses. Lymphosarcoma should be considered in horses with unexplained chronic illness.

Case study: Lusitano stallion with kidney disease

An 8-year-old imported stallion showed weight loss, poor appetite, and urinary problems. Diagnostics revealed multiple kidney stones. Quality of life continued to deteriorate despite supportive care and the horse was euthanized. Post-mortem analysis confirmed multiple kidney stones and severe chronic kidney disease. Observed liver lesions were confirmed as *Echinococcus multilocularis* (incidental parasite). A breed predisposition for kidney disease worsened by water quality and feed composition are possible.



Case study: Thoroughbred gelding with liver toxicity

An 8-year-old gelding developed rapid-onset lethargy, swollen limbs, jaundice, and sun burns after exposure to pasture weeds. The horse deteriorated despite comprehensive treatment and was euthanized. Post mortem testing confirmed severe liver and kidney damage, likely from pyrrolizidine alkaloid plants such as alsike clover and tansy ragwort. Owners should monitor pastures for toxic plants and act quickly if horses show signs of toxicity to prevent similar cases.

2) Syndromic and Laboratory Surveillance



Equine infectious diseases remained generally stable, with influenza, equine herpesvirus, and strangles occurring at low to moderate levels. West Nile virus cases continue, with seasonal and regional clustering, emphasizing the need for vaccination, mosquito control, and prompt reporting. Potomac horse fever and *Salmonella* detections remained within normal ranges, and no unusual patterns were observed.

Cardiovascular issues were uncommon, with occasional arrhythmias and murmurs reported, and a single case of congestive heart failure diagnosed. Congenital conditions such as hernias and limb deformities remain sporadic but persistent, while genetic syndromes continue to be rare.

Dermatological problems, including allergic dermatitis, bacterial infections (*Staphylococcus aureus*), and sarcoids, continue to occur at low to moderate levels, with some cases approaching control limits. External parasites and fungal infections remain uncommon, and trends in skin tumors are stable.

Digestive system disease remains common, particularly dental problems, gastric ulcers, colic, and diarrhea in foals and adults. Key pathogens like *Clostridium*, *Salmonella*, *Lawsonia*, and *Cryptosporidium* remained within or near normal levels. Colitis and gastric lesions continue to be observed, and gastrointestinal parasites such as strongyles remain widespread but stable.

Multisystemic disease, including fever of unknown origin, immune-mediated anemia, and lymphadenitis, remains uncommon, with occasional cases of *Anaplasma phagocytophilum* and neoplasia (cancer) detected. Trends are generally stable.

Reproductive disease continues to be common, with uterine infections, male reproductive injuries, and occasional abortions observed. Pathogens such as *Arcanobacterium hippocoleae* and bacteria associated with neonatal septicemia remain sporadic and stable.

Respiratory disease remains frequent, including upper and lower airway infections, asthma, and exercise-induced pulmonary hemorrhage in performance horses. Key pathogens detected include *Streptococcus equi*, *Rhodococcus equi*, and equine herpesvirus, with trends generally stable. No influenza A was detected.

Urinary system disease, including chronic and acute renal failure and kidney stones continue to occur at low levels, with rare detection of *Enterobacter cloacae* infections.





4) Scan of emerging and external disease alerts

Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) September 1st to December 3rd

Twenty-five cases were reported in Canada, all in Alberta, including a horse without clinical signs that was euthanized. EIA remains difficult to diagnose post-mortem, emphasizing the importance of testing and reporting before horses move between farms or provinces.

Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile Virus (WNV)

EEE cases occurred in Ontario and Quebec, while WNV affected 42 horses across Canada, mostly in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Neurologic signs continue to cluster seasonally, highlighting the need for mosquito control, vaccination review, and early detection, especially in travelling horses. Human cases of WNV are clustered in Eastern Canada (mostly in ON).

Equine Herpesvirus (EHV-1 and EHV-4)

Two cases of neurologic EHV cases were confirmed in Alberta, while EHV-4 and respiratory EHV infections were reported sporadically. Older horses are more likely to develop neurologic disease. Quarantine and monitoring of exposed horses remain critical to prevent outbreaks.

In the US, an outbreak of EHV-1 was traced to the Women's Professional Rodeo Association World Finals in Texas, Nov. 5–9, with 46 cases across 7 states. No Canadian horses affected.

Strangles (*Streptococcus equi*)

Cases were reported in British Columbia and Alberta, with both PCR-confirmed and suspect cases. Strangles remains a concern for herd management, and isolation of affected horses and good hygiene practices are recommended to reduce transmission.

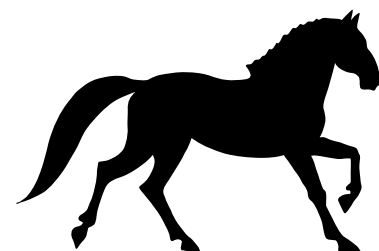
Vesicular Stomatitis Virus (VSV, US)

A new outbreak was confirmed in Arizona, affecting four premises with the New Jersey serotype. While this is not in Canada, awareness is important for horse movement across borders and for prompt reporting of vesicular lesions.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

HPAI remains active in wild birds and poultry in western Canada, especially affecting BC and AB. No confirmed dairy cases in Canada, but vigilance is needed due to potential exposure near infected birds. Biosecurity and monitoring of wild migratory flocks, pastures and water sources are recommended to prevent transmission.

Human, poultry, and dairy livestock exposures continue in the US, with illness and economic impacts reported in poultry and dairy herds. Awareness of interspecies transmission highlights the need for strict biosecurity on mixed-species farms and careful handling of affected animals.



Key take-away messages for horse owners

- Horses showing unexplained or widespread health problems, such as reproductive issues or ongoing weight loss, should be checked promptly by a veterinarian and may need advanced testing or referral.
- Most horse diseases remained stable, but increases in respiratory infections, skin problems, and certain bacterial infections highlight the need for ongoing monitoring and early diagnosis.
- Strangles, neurologic equine herpesvirus, and West Nile virus, continue to occur in Western Canada, often in specific regions or seasons. Good biosecurity, mosquito control, careful vaccination planning, and prompt reporting are especially important for horses that travel.
- Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is active in wild birds, poultry, and some livestock, with occasional spread to mammals and humans. Veterinarians and horse owners should remain aware and watch for unusual signs, even though no Canadian horses have tested positive

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