



Eastern Equine Encephalitis Confirmed in Marathon County Horse

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MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) confirms that a 5-month-old colt in Marathon County has tested positive for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). It is the state’s first confirmed case of EEE in a horse this year. In 2024, DATCP documented 10 cases of EEE in horses; access [an online map](#) of the 2024 cases.

EEE and West Nile Virus (WNV) are viruses that can cause inflammation of the brain (encephalitis). Symptoms of EEE in horses include altered mentation, impaired vision, head pressing, circling, inability to swallow, lack of coordination, seizures, and death. Affected horses are often found down and unable to rise. EEE is fatal in most horses showing signs of illness. Equine owners should contact their veterinarian if they observe any of these signs.

EEE and WNV are not contagious between horses and do not pass directly between horses and humans. Mosquitoes carry the virus from infected birds, and the only route of transmission is from a mosquito bite. The infections confirm that there are mosquitoes infected with EEE in the state that can transmit the virus to people and animals.

Because these viruses follow mosquito populations, the threat is normally highest when mosquitoes are most active, from middle to late summer until the first killing frost. DATCP strongly encourages equine owners to speak with their veterinarian about vaccinating their horses for EEE. The American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) recommends vaccinating for both EEE and WNV as part of the core vaccine protocol, meaning all horses should be vaccinated for these diseases regardless of activity level.

In addition to vaccination, follow the tips below to reduce exposure to mosquitos:

- Remove items that could collect stagnant water (old tires, buckets, unused troughs, etc.).
- Keep rain gutters draining properly; turn wading pools and wheelbarrows upside down.
- Clean and chlorinate pools, outdoor saunas, and hot tubs; drain water from pool covers.
- Empty and replace water in birdbaths at least once a week.
- Consider keeping horses in the barn from dusk to dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.

More information on EEE can be found at:

https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/HorsesEEEWNV.aspx.

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