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<b>Press Release</b>		<b>COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE</b>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

No. 11-22

May 20, 2011

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**DEC Issues Caution on Horse Virus Outbreak**

(JUNEAU, AK) – An outbreak of equine herpesvirus (EHV) has been identified in several horses that participated in the National Cutting Horse Association’s (NCHA) Western National Championships in Ogden, Utah, on April 30 to May 8, 2011. The affected horses are from a number of western states, including Arizona, Colorado, California, Idaho, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Western Canada. No horses from Alaska participated in the competition, however many horses come to Alaska every spring from these states.

There are no official travel restrictions on the movement of horses at this time, and infected horses could arrive in Alaska.

EHV is highly contagious among horses and has been known to affect llamas and camelids occasionally as well, however it does not pose a threat to human health. Fever is typically the first sign of infection. Symptoms can be severe and include respiratory disease (coughing, nasal discharge), aborted pregnancy, and neurologic disease. Neurologic symptoms include lethargy, weakness in the hind end and lack of coordination. Urine dribbling and loss of tail tone may also be seen. Most importantly, none of these signs are specific to EHV so contact a veterinarian, as diagnostic testing is required to confirm EHV infection. The virus may also remain dormant for many years and be activated by stressful conditions.

The common transmission route is direct horse-to-horse contact, but indirect transmission is also possible. The virus is primarily spread by aerosol from the respiratory tract, or contact with an infected aborted fetus or birthing materials. EHV can also be spread by people or equipment, such as tack, grooming equipment, feed/water buckets, and trailers. The virus can stay viable in the environment for several weeks.

Steps to combat EHV infection include:

- If a horse is exposed to the virus, monitor its temperature twice a day for 14 days.
- Immediately report temperatures over 101.5 F to a veterinarian.
- Restrict movement on or off the premises.
- Isolate sick horses a minimum of 30 feet away from all other horses for 21 days.

- Wash hands and sanitize boots after handling isolated horses.
- Use separate equipment, bucket, halters/leads for isolated horse.
- Ideally, use separate personnel for isolated horses. If unable to, use protective clothing such as coveralls, boot covers, and gloves. Do not use same clothing with other horses.

More information on equine herpesvirus, including prevention tips can be found on the following websites:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/equine/ehv/>

<http://www.aaep.org/images/files/EquineHerpesvirusGuidelines051711.pdf>

[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal\\_health/content/printable\\_version/HorseBioSecurity\\_final.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/content/printable_version/HorseBioSecurity_final.pdf)

[http://www.aaep.org/pdfs/control\\_guidelines/Biosecurity\\_instructions%201.pdf](http://www.aaep.org/pdfs/control_guidelines/Biosecurity_instructions%201.pdf)

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