

Vesicular Stomatitis

■ What is vesicular Stomatitis?

- Vesicular Stomatitis is a viral disease that primarily affects horses and cattle and occasionally swine, sheep, goats, llamas, and alpacas. In rare occasions humans become infected with the disease after handling infected animals.



■ Why are we concerned about vesicular Stomatitis?

- Vesicular Stomatitis in itself does not generally cause animals to die or become severely sick but its outward symptoms mimic a different disease called foot and mouth disease, a foreign animal disease of cloven-hoofed animals that was eradicated from the United States in 1929. If foot and mouth disease was reintroduced into the United States there would be huge negative economic impact to the livestock industry.

■ What are the clinical symptoms?

- The clinical signs of Vesicular Stomatitis in horses include fever and blisters on the tongue, lips and coronary bands. The blisters are so painful that the horse may refuse to eat, develop excessive salivation or become lame if the coronary band is affected. The incubation period ranges from 2 to 21 days.



■ How is it transmitted?

- How Vesicular Stomatitis spreads is not fully understood but it is believed to be transmitted by arthropods such as flies, mosquitoes and midges. Horses can spread the virus if the saliva from the ruptured blisters contaminates common areas such as water and feed buckets. Affected horses may take seven to 14 days to recover and can suffer weight loss from the inability to eat well.

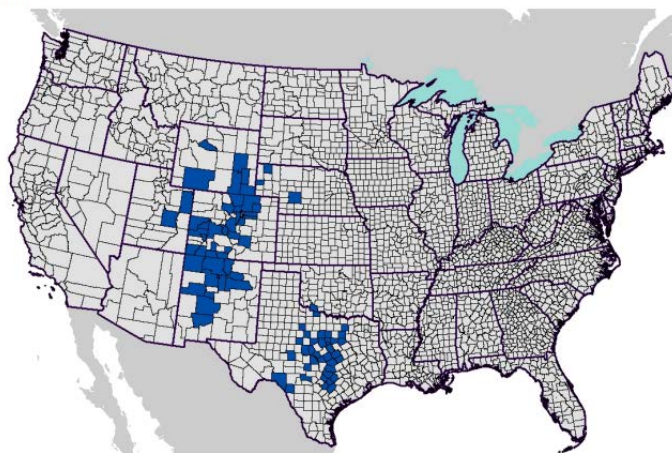
■ Controlling an Outbreak

- There is not a specific cure for the disease. If a horse has symptoms consistent with the disease the veterinarian must contact the State Veterinarian or the USDA, APHIS immediately. At that time, a blood sample and an oral swab are collected from each suspect animal and the premises are quarantined pending laboratory confirmation of the disease. Farms that have confirmed cases of VS are quarantined for 30 days after all clinical signs have resolved. All sick horses should be isolated from the healthy horses.

■ Summary of the current Outbreak

- The 2019 VSV outbreak began on June 21, 2019, when the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa confirmed the first VSV-positive premises in Kinney County, Texas. New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Oklahoma, Nebraska and Utah subsequently broke with cases which were confirmed by NVSL on June 26, 2019 (Sandoval County, New Mexico), July 3, 2019 (Weld County, Colorado), July 24, 2019 (Platte County, Wyoming), July 29, 2019 (Tillman County, Oklahoma), August 9, 2019 (Lincoln County, Nebraska), and August 19, 2019 (Emery and Uintah Counties, Utah). Since the start of the outbreak, 851 VSV-affected premises have been identified (353 confirmed positive, 498 suspect). Eight hundred forty-eight (848) of these premises have only equine species clinically affected and 3 premises have affected cattle (Boulder and Delta County, Colorado and Gonzales County, Texas).
- Nebraska currently has 3 active quarantines in Dawes and Scottsbluff counties as the first quarantine in Lincoln County has been lifted.
- Since June 21, 2019 there have been 848 cases of VS in equidae across 7 states. (Colorado, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming).

Map 2. Counties with Premises Quarantined for VSV Since June 21, 2019 (shaded in blue)



■ Should I be concerned as a horse owner?

- Currently in our practice area eastern Nebraska and western Iowa the risk is low, but it may affect travel with your horse with respect to time restrictions placed on CVIs (health certificates). If you have any questions please call our office.