



Gaming Commission - 518-388-3415



Agriculture & Markets - 518-457-0752

NYS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & MARKETS AND STATE GAMING COMMISSION ISSUE PRECAUTIONS REGARDING EQUINE HERPES VIRUS AT VERNON DOWNS RACETRACK

New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets Commissioner Darrel J. Aubertine and State Gaming Commission Acting Executive Director Robert Williams today issued the following statement:

Laboratory tests completed at the New York State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory revealed that at least three horses stabled at Vernon Downs Raceway have been infected with a strain of the Equine Herpes Virus Type 1 (EHV-1). The horses were stalled in two barns at the track, both of which have since been quarantined.

EHV-1 is an airborne viral infection which can cause respiratory disease, abortion in broodmares, death in newborn foals and a neurological form of herpes. The virus does not affect people.

Because of its condition and prognosis due to the infection, one Standardbred horse was humanely euthanized. The other two are under quarantine in two barns at the racetrack.

As of May 6, no other horses at New York racetracks have been reported to have EHV-1.

If you are the owner, trainer or caretaker of a horse that has been at Vernon Downs in the past two weeks, or believe your horse has been potentially exposed to EHV-1, the following guidelines are recommended:

- Check your horse's temperature twice a day for ten days. If the temperature is 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit or greater, contact your veterinarian immediately.
- If you wish to test your horse, consult your veterinarian. At this time, the preferred test is PCR analysis performed on nasal swab specimens. Blood samples may also be tested.
- The decision to test a horse not showing signs of disease should not be taken lightly. Due to the ubiquitous nature of EHV-1, many horses will test positive for presence of the virus and not develop the disease. Also, a single negative test has limited value in demonstrating whether or not a horse will become ill or may be shedding the virus.

Horsepersons and owners should check with track management before shipping horses to or from a track.

Since Saturday, May 4, live racing at Vernon Downs has been canceled and will continue to be as the Department of Agriculture and Markets, the State Gaming Commission and track management work to assess and contain the outbreak. No horses are permitted to ship in or out of the facility.

Vernon Downs' management, horsepersons and their veterinarians are taking responsible measures to limit spread and the Gaming Commission and Department of Agriculture and Markets are working with them to investigate and contain the illness.

Nearly all horses will be exposed to EHV-1 at some point in their lifetime and horse owners should always be cautious when introducing new horses to their stables. The disease is difficult to detect as it takes on a wide range of manifestations, from a complete lack of clinical symptoms to pneumonia to abortion in mares to full-blown neurologic cases.

Both agencies will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates as needed. For more information on EHV-1, visit the [American Association of Equine Practitioner's](#) Web site or check [USDA APHIS'](#) brochure on the virus.

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