



TEXAS RACING COMMISSION

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PRESS RELEASE
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Austin – Due to ongoing analysis of positive equine herpes virus (EHV-1) cases at the Fair Grounds Race Course in New Orleans, LA, the Commission is directing Texas horse racetracks and licensed training facilities to prohibit horses being shipped in from the Fair Grounds. Dr. Stewart Marsh, Chief Veterinarian, has determined that the horses from the Fair Grounds present the possibility of communicable or contagious disease to other race horses on the grounds of Texas horse racetracks and licensed training facilities.

On Wednesday, December 24, 2008, one horse at the Fair Grounds was confirmed to have the virus. A quarantine went into effect for approximately 70 horses at the track on Saturday, December 27. On Monday, December 29, five additional horses were confirmed to have tested positive for the virus. Additional testing is scheduled to occur and the results should be available by mid-January 2009.

The recommended quarantine period for the virus is 21 days after possible exposure to the virus.

Equine herpes is a viral disease contracted from the air or by direct contact. Symptoms commonly include an upper respiratory infection and a fever. In severe cases, the virus can cause neurological problems. The disease poses no threat to humans.

The Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) has set criteria that requires handlers of horses shipping to the Fair Grounds to provide proof that horses have had a certified veterinary inspection within the prior 48 hours and a recent herpes vaccination. The horses must also show a normal temperature reading upon arrival. In addition, according to a news release on the Fair Grounds Race Course website, biosecurity measures have been implemented to guard against the spread of the virus. These procedures include certificates of veterinary inspection required for all horses that enter the stable area, a requirement that horses that ship in to compete be allowed only into the track's Receiving Barn; disinfectant procedures for both the Receiving Barn and the starting gate; the use of latex gloves by starting gate crew, and disinfectant procedures in the paddock at the end of each day's racing.