

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Are Your Horses Vaccinated for West Nile Virus?

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department would like to take this opportunity to encourage all horse owners to vaccinate their horses against West Nile Virus.

“West Nile Virus can be just as serious for horses as it can be for people. The good news is that there is a safe and effective vaccine for horses that can easily be added to the horse’s spring vaccine schedule,” states Dr. Cort Mohr, DVM, veterinarian at Four Winds Animal Clinic.

West Nile Virus (WNV) is transmitted to horses through the bite of an infected mosquito. Horses can not transmit WNV to other horses, birds or people.

Per the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, the signs and symptoms of West Nile encephalitis in horses include loss of appetite, depression, fever, quivering muscles, and weakness of limbs. Infected horses may or may not show clinical signs.

While there is no specific treatment for horses with WNV, the Department of Agriculture has these recommendations for prevention.

- House horses indoors during peak periods of mosquito activity (dusk and dawn).
- Avoid turning on lights inside the stable during the evening and overnight.
- Place incandescent bulbs around the perimeter of the stable to attract mosquitoes away from the horses.
- Remove all birds, including chickens that are in, or close to, the stable.
- Topical preparations containing mosquito repellents are available for horses. Read the product label before using and follow all instructions.
- Fogging of stable premises can be done in the evening to reduce mosquitoes; read directions carefully before using.

Vaccination is the best practice for prevention of WNV in horses. Owners should contact their veterinarian for additional information.

SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th Street – one block north of Arby’s in McCook. The Imperial office is located at 501 Broadway, south entrance. You can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins and Red Willow counties.

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