



STATE OF DELAWARE  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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AUSTIN SHORT  
ACTING SECRETARY

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Dear Delaware Equine Veterinarian,

I am writing to provide you with information concerning the recent diagnosis of **Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM)** in the USA and to ask for your assistance in addressing concerns that will likely develop within the equine industry. We are depending on you to keep horse owners and other industry representatives apprised of the current CEM situation during your regular visits to their premises. We hope to prevent unnecessary anxiety and to minimize speculation about the extent to which CEM may affect the US equine population. The Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA) has developed a short message for horse owners and other concerned parties containing basic information on CEM and the current status of the national investigation (see attached sheet). DDA will also be providing web-based reference material on our website in the near future: [www.dda.state.de.us](http://www.dda.state.de.us). The attached letter refers horse owners to their veterinarians as a primary source of information about the health of their horses as it relates to the finding of CEM in the USA.

**CEM is a reportable foreign animal disease, and any suspect cases should be reported immediately to DDA, Poultry and Animal Health Section, at 302-698-4500.**

For urgent matters such as a foreign animal disease suspects requiring DDA attention outside of normal business hours, practicing veterinarians can contact the State Veterinarian, Dr. Heather Hirst, on her cell phone at **302-632-7105**. The USDA Area Veterinarian-in-Charge, Dr. Joel Goldman, can also be notified at **410-349-9708** (if you are having trouble reaching Dr. Hirst). We ask that you do not distribute the latter two phone numbers outside of the veterinary community.

**DELAWARE:** There is presently no need for CEM testing of Delaware horses, beyond what may have been scheduled in support of routine commerce. Should a veterinarian determine that CEM testing is necessary for any reason, he/she should use the contact information listed above for DDA or USDA veterinarians since there are specific USDA mandated testing protocols. Although we do not have an approved CEM laboratory in Delaware, the Maryland Department of Agriculture Lab is approved to conduct CEM diagnostics. The Maryland Laboratory is located in College Park, and their phone number is **301-314-1870**. Dr. Kathryn Nepote is the point of contact at the Maryland Lab. She will be glad to assist you with validating the need for the testing request and ensuring that sampling protocols are understood. The fee for service is \$35.00/culture and several cultures may be needed, depending on the situation.

**USA:** On 15 December 08, the State of Kentucky detected a case of contagious equine metritis (CEM) in a quarter horse stallion on a premises in central Kentucky. Since then, a total of nine stallions have been confirmed as positive for CEM by USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratories. As of 12 January 2009, the locations of 326 other exposed horses had been confirmed.

Please note that the definition of an **exposed horse** is *one that was on the index premises in Kentucky and/or one that was bred to a CEM-positive horse, either naturally or via artificial insemination, or as determined by State Animal Health Officials or APHIS officials.*

All CEM-positive horses, and all exposed horses that have been located, are currently under quarantine or hold order. Testing and treatment protocols are being put into action for all located horses. Testing and/or treatment protocols are being put into action for those horses. The investigation is in an early phase and the full extent of the problem will not be evident for some time. DDA is very confident in the abilities and diligence of the investigating agencies and their personnel.

Thank you for your assistance with this important matter.

Best Regards,

Heather L Hirst, DVM MS

State Veterinarian