

Equine Infectious Anaemia (EIA)



Equine Infectious Anaemia (EIA) also called “swamp fever” is a viral disease transmitted from infected to non-infected horses by biting flies e.g. horse flies and via infected blood and blood products including contaminated needles and syringes.

The disease is not currently in the UK but is circulating in Europe in particular Italy and Romania. There was a significant outbreak of EIA in Ireland in 2006 following the introduction of the virus in imported blood products. More recently in England in 2010 and 2012 cases were identified in horses that had been imported previously.

CLINICAL SIGNS:

- recurring fever
- anaemia (pale mucous membranes)
- fluid retention
- weight loss
- death
- signs can be mild
- lifetime carrier status.



RECURRING FEVER IS ONE OF THE SIGNS OF DISEASE

Diagnosis

Diagnosis involves a blood test for the detection of antibodies to EIA (Coggins test).

It is a notifiable disease so all positive cases will be reported to and dealt with by the animal health (AHVLA) department of DEFRA.



TRANSMISSION IS BY INSECT CARRIER MOST COMMONLY HORSE AND STABLE FLIES, INFECTED NEEDLES, BLOOD AND MILK PRODUCTS, SEMEN, SALIVA, NASAL DISCHARGES.

Treatment

No treatment available or allowed – compulsory slaughter and disposal of the affected horse

ENSURE APPROPRIATE QUARANTINE AND TESTING OF NEW HORSES



PREVENTION:

- use insect repellent and mesh to reduce exposure to biting flies;
- ensure appropriate quarantine and testing of horses coming in from areas where the disease is present;
- ensure responsibly sourced and certified blood products, semen and milk products;
- ensure all imports are legal and have all the correct paperwork – don't be tempted to take shortcuts;
- it is advisable for horses to be certified disease free prior to breeding;
- no vaccine is available.



INFECTED BLOOD PRODUCTS AND BLOOD CONTAMINATED NEEDLES AND SYRINGES CAN BE A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF INFECTION



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