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FOR RELEASE

Equine Herpes Virus (EHV-1) Confirmed in South Dakota May 2, 2014

PIERRE, S.D. – Equine Herpesvirus (EHV-1) has been confirmed in a horse in Brown County, South Dakota. The 5-year-old quarterhorse mare became ill with neurologic signs, including incoordination and difficulty walking. The horse is being treated at a local veterinary clinic.

Dr. Dustin Oedekoven, state veterinarian, said that this virus is not uncommon in the horse population and that it may result in respiratory disease, abortion, or neurologic disease. Respiratory or neurologic disease may be exhibited when horses are transported, commingled, or otherwise stressed. Vaccination and biosecurity are two preventative measures that horse owners should consider in consultation with their veterinarian.

EHV-1 is a contagious disease which is spread from horse to horse through direct contact or by contact with contaminated objects such as buckets, brushes, tack, hay racks, etc. This is an important consideration when transporting horses to events.

“If you travel with your horse, good biosecurity practices can reduce the risk of disease transmission” said Dr. Oedekoven. “Cleaning and disinfection of feed and water buckets, stalls, and trailers is important in preventing the spread of disease. Horse owners can minimize spread of EHV by implementing a 21-day isolation policy when adding new horses or returning horses to established herds.”

Dr. Oedekoven strongly encourages organizers and planners of equine events to seek the advice of veterinary professionals for guidance on disease prevention. Horses that have been vaccinated less than seven days or greater than 90 days before events are at higher risk for spreading EHV. In addition to consideration of standard health requirements, protocols should be developed prior to the events to address potential isolation and quarantine procedures in case of an outbreak.

The EHV-1 virus is not a threat to human health. For additional information, please visit the AIB website at: <http://aib.sd.gov/diseasecontrol.shtm#horses>.