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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NDA CONFIRMS VESICULAR STOMATITIS CASE IN HORSE

Horse, Cattle Owners Advised to Take Precautions

LINCOLN – The Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) has confirmed a case of Vesicular Stomatitis (VS) in a horse in Buffalo County. The horses on the infected premises have been quarantined. At present time, one additional horse on the premises is also exhibiting VS symptoms. All animals on the infected premises will be quarantined for at least 14 days after the onset of lesions in the last affected animal.

VS is a viral disease which primarily affects horses and cattle, but can also affect sheep, goats and swine. The disease is characterized by fever and the formation of blister-like lesions in the mouth and on the dental pad, tongue, lips, nostrils, hooves and teats. When the blisters break, there is usually salivation and nasal discharge. As a result of these painful lesions, infected animals may refuse to eat and drink, which can lead to weight loss. There are currently no USDA-approved vaccines for VS.

“Vesicular Stomatitis is primarily transmitted through the bite of infected black flies, sand flies and midges,” said State Veterinarian Dr. Dennis Hughes. “There are things livestock owners can do to reduce flies and other insects where animals are housed, but, until freezing temperatures move in and kill the insects that spread the virus, VS will continue to be a threat in Nebraska.”

Hughes went on to say, “Since VS can also spread by contact between animals and by shared equipment, like tools or tack, we want livestock owners to be aware and practice good biosecurity measures with their animals, particularly with animals that may come in contact with others.”

To help prevent the spread of the disease, Nebraska has import restrictions for livestock coming into the state from states that have confirmed VS cases. If you are considering moving an animal into Nebraska from an affected state, please call 402-471-2351 to learn more about the importation order.

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VS also affects exports. Individuals from Nebraska transporting animals and animal products to other states and countries should contact the destination state/country to learn about their import requirements before transporting animals.

“The virus itself usually runs its course in five to seven days, and it can take up to an additional seven days for an infected animal to recover from the symptoms,” said Hughes.

Although humans can become infected when handling the affected animals, it rarely occurs. To avoid human exposure, people should use personal protective measures when handling affected animals.

VS is a notifiable disease. Individuals or practitioners who suspect or have concerns about VS should contact NDA at 402-471-2351. For more information on VS, visit:

<http://www.nda.nebraska.gov/animal/diseases/vs/index.html>.

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