

News Release

Texas Animal Health Commission

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For immediate release:

Vesicular Stomatitis Quarantine Lifted in Starr County, Texas; Continue to Check with States of Destination Before Hauling Livestock!

Texas animal health officials have lifted a quarantine on a ranch in Starr County, where horses have recovered from vesicular stomatitis (VS), a virus that occurs sporadically in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Wyoming and other western states. Currently, there are no quarantines or active investigations for vesicular stomatitis in Texas.

Livestock susceptible to VS include horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, deer and other cloven-hooved animals. Infected animals can develop blisters, lesions and sloughing of the skin on the muzzles, tongue, teats and above the hooves and usually recover in two to three weeks. To prevent the spread of this virus, which is not fully understood, quarantines remain in effect until at least 21 days after the animal's lesions have healed.

“Although the quarantine in Texas is released, some states may continue to enforce enhanced entry requirements or restrictions on Texas livestock until the height of the VS ‘season’ ends in late fall, when temperatures drop. New Mexico also has had VS this year, and it is possible that another VS case could be detected in Texas, since the virus is active this year.” said Dr. Bob Hillman, Texas’ state veterinarian and head of the Texas Animal Health Commission, the state’s livestock and poultry health regulatory agency. He urged private veterinary practitioners and livestock owners to check with the states of destination prior to moving animals to ensure all entry requirements are met.

Dr. Hillman explained that the clinical signs of VS mimic the highly dangerous foot-and-mouth disease, and a veterinary exam and laboratory tests are needed to confirm a diagnosis. “Horses are not susceptible to foot-and-mouth disease, but they are often the first animals to get VS,” said Dr. Hillman. “We can assist with private veterinary practitioners with disease investigations at no charge, and we can receive disease reports 24 hours a day at 800-550-8242.”