

## What's up with Equine Piroplasmosis (EP)?

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**Region 3 Director**



In late 2009, regulatory veterinarians learned of positive cases of EP on a ranch in South Texas. Since that time, the TAHC has worked closely with the ranch management in conducting the epidemiology of this outbreak and in the tracing and testing of all horses connected with the ranch. This case has now been successfully closed. The overwhelming majority of new cases disclosed are represented by the racing Quarter horse population in Texas. Other breeds infected have included Thoroughbreds, Saddlebreds, and working ranch Quarter horses.

TAHC continues to follow up on new positive cases as they are made known to us through the work you do for your clients. Currently there are 58 horses that remain confined to regularly-inspected quarantine facilities in various locations throughout the state. When new cases are disclosed to us, our first priority is to verify the case by ownership, identity and location of the horse. The suspect is re-bled immediately for test confirmation, scratched for ticks, sprayed with Permethrin II® (2.5 oz/ gallon of water) and placed under quarantine. In addition, all horses on the premises are sprayed and, depending on exposure to the suspect, these “cohorts” are tested as well.

Having accurate identification of the suspect horse and having valid owner contact information are critical steps in the work that we do, and is an area in which you as a practitioner can be of tremendous help to us. Some of the cases we have dealt with became complicated when we have been presented with horses of dubious identity for re-testing or euthanasia, or when the suspects were being hidden from us. Having complete owner contact information is something that extends down to the level of your front office and we certainly appreciate your staff's diligence in capturing that information. In our continuing effort to work expediently in getting these cases resolved while avoiding legal entanglements associated with identification and ownership issues, you are now required to use the TAHC Piroplasmosis test chart (TAHC 10-07) any time you submit a EP test to either the state or federal laboratory. You may use access the forms on the [TAHC Piroplasmosis webpage](#). We have found that the digital-photo-enabled form is a quick and accurate way to identify your test subjects, but you may also elect to draw-in the markings on this form, similar to that of the Coggin's test chart. It is now required that all horses entering a sanctioned race track in Texas have a negative piroplasmosis test and that it be on the new test chart.

Most veterinarians with the TAHC have had several years of practice experience so we are sensitive to issues that you face every day in running a practice. However, the converse of that is probably not true in most cases. You might be amazed at the legal and compliance scenarios that develop in the regulatory practice world! Your assistance in providing us with information is always appreciated,

and although the use of the TAHC form 10-07 may take a few more minutes to complete, the information captured on the form actually saves the State of Texas time and resources in closing these new cases of EP. Plus, the form gives your clients and their horses a level of professionalism that reflects the standard of care which you provide to them - something that we can all be proud of as veterinarians.