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FAST FACTS ABOUT EQUINE VIRAL ARTERITIS (EVA)

DEFINITION

EVA IS A CONTAGIOUS DISEASE THAT ATTACKS THE CIRCULATORY, RESPIRATORY, AND REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEMS. ALTHOUGH OCCURRING RATHER INFREQUENTLY, IT CAN HAVE A DEVASTATING EFFECT ON BROODMARES AND STALLIONS. THE MOST SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES OF EVA ARE ABORTION AND PERMANENT ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CARRIER STATE IN A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF INFECTED STALLIONS.

CAUSE

EVA IS CAUSED BY A VIRUS CALLED *EQUINE ARTERITIS VIRUS*; IT CAN BE TRANSMITTED BY ACUTELY AFFECTED HORSES THROUGH THE RESPIRATORY ROUTE OR VENEREAL ROUTE.

CLINICAL SIGNS

ANY COMBINATION OR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING SIGNS CAN BE SEEN: FEVER, SWELLING OF THE LIMBS, LACK OF APPETITE, DEPRESSION, SWELLING OF THE EXTERNAL GENITALIA IN THE MALE OR OF THE MAMMARY GLANDS IN THE MARE, CONJUNCTIVITIS, NASAL DISCHARGE, SKIN RASH, AND ABORTION IN MARES. INFECTION IN VERY YOUNG FOALS CAN CAUSE SEVERE PNEUMONIA AND DEATH. MOST CASES OF INFECTION WITH EAV NEVER DEVELOP CLINICAL SIGNS.

DIAGNOSIS

RESPIRATORY DISEASE = BLOOD SAMPLES AND NASAL SWABS. ABORTION = SAMPLES OF FETUS AND PLACENTA. SUSPICION OF SHEDDING STALLION = SEMEN SAMPLE

TREATMENT

THERE IS NO SPECIFIC TREATMENT FOR EVA.

PROGNOSIS

ALMOST ALL HORSES RECOVER FROM EVA WITHIN 7-14 DAYS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF SOME VERY YOUNG FOALS. FEVER IN STALLIONS CAN LEAD TO TEMPORARY INFERTILITY. AFTER ACUTE INFECTION, CARRIER STALLIONS CAN SHED VIRUS FOR YEARS IN THEIR SEMEN (CARRIER RATE AMONG POSITIVE STALLIONS CAN = 40-45%).

PREVENTION

MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES, SUCH AS ISOLATION OF NEW ARRIVALS TO THE FARM AND BLOOD TESTING ALL BREEDING ANIMALS WITH IDENTIFICATION OF CARRIERS, ARE EFFECTIVE IN LIMITING EXPOSURE TO EVA. VACCINATION OF BREEDING ANIMALS IS A FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE. BECAUSE OF THE ECONOMIC IMPACT ON U.S. HORSE OWNERS, A VOLUNTARY EVA CONTROL PROGRAM THAT INCLUDES PROTOCOLS FOR IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING SOURCES OF EVA INFECTION (BY WAY OF CARRIER STALLIONS OR VIRUS INFECTIVE SEMEN) AND FOR ASSISTING STALLION OWNERS IN PREVENTING ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CARRIER STATE AND MINIMIZE THE RISK OF EVA ABORTION IN MARES HAS BEEN DEVELOPED. KENTUCKY AND NY ALSO HAVE REGULATIONS IN PLACE FOR THOROUGHBREDS REGARDING PROTOCOLS OF BREEDING SHEDDING STALLIONS.

VACCINATION

THE VACCINE IS A SINGLE-DOSE PRODUCT, BUT REQUIRES AN ANNUAL BOOSTER.

-Dr. Lyda Denney-