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NYS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & MARKETS AND STATE GAMING COMMISSION ISSUE STATEMENT REGARDING POTENTIAL EQUINE HERPES VIRUS EXPOSURE AT AQUEDUCT RACETRACK

New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets Acting Commissioner James B. Bays and State Gaming Commission Acting Executive Director Robert Williams today issued the following advisory:

Two horses that were potentially exposed to an Equine Herpes Type 1 (EHV-1) positive horse at Parx Racing in Bensalem, PA, have been located at Aqueduct Racetrack. At this time, these horses have been examined by a veterinarian and are not showing signs of illness. These horses will be in isolation off-track with daily monitoring by Commission and New York Racing Association, Inc. (NYRA) officials. The horses that were in the same barn at Aqueduct as these potentially exposed horses are also being closely monitored daily for signs of illness by track officials.

EHV-1 is a common viral infection which can cause respiratory disease, abortion in broodmares, death in newborn foals and in rare instances, a neurological form of herpes. It may be spread by close contact with an infected horse or by objects contaminated by an infected horse. The virus does not affect people.

If you are the owner, trainer or caretaker of a horse that has been at Parx Racing in the past two weeks, or believe your horse has been potentially exposed to EHV-1, the following guidelines are recommended:

- Check your horse's temperature twice a day for ten days. If the temperature is 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit or greater, contact your veterinarian immediately.
- If you wish to test your horse, consult your veterinarian. At this time, the preferred test is PCR analysis performed on nasal swab specimens. Blood samples may also be tested.
- The decision to test a horse not showing signs of disease should not be taken lightly. Due to the ubiquitous nature of EHV-1, many horses will test positive for presence of the

virus and not develop the disease. Also, a single negative test has limited value in demonstrating whether or not a horse will become ill or may be shedding the virus.

- Look for neurologic signs, respiratory signs, loss of bladder tone (urine dribbling) or poor tail tone. If any of these signs are seen, call your veterinarian immediately and then call the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets at (518) 457-3502.

Nearly all horses will be exposed to EHV-1 at some point in their lifetime and horse owners should always be cautious when introducing new horses to their stables. The disease is difficult to detect as it takes on a wide range of manifestations, from a complete lack of clinical symptoms to pneumonia to abortion in mares to full-blown neurologic cases.

Both agencies will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates as needed.

For more information on EHV-1, please visit:

- <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/equine/ehv/>
- <http://www.aaep.org/images/files/EquineHerpesvirusFinal022513.pdf>.

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