

August 26, 2024

Office of Veterinary Affairs
Scott E. Palmer, V.M.D.
Equine Medical Director

EQUINE MEDICAL ADVISORY – EASTERN EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS

The [New York State Department of Health](#) recently confirmed the recent presence of [Eastern Equine Encephalitis \(EEE\) in horses in Cayuga, Madison, Oneida, Orange, Saint Lawrence, Ulster, Washington and Wayne counties](#) and have noted two horses – one in Orange County and one in Ulster County– died of EEE in August.

[Eastern Equine Encephalitis](#), most commonly found in the Eastern U.S. and Canada, is a rare but extremely serious and often fatal viral disease spread by infected mosquitoes that can cause severe brain inflammation in humans and horses.

EEE is classified as a Core Vaccination by the [American Association of Equine Practitioners](#):

“CORE VACCINATIONS protect against diseases that are endemic to a region, are virulent/highly contagious, pose a risk of severe disease, those having potential public health significance, and/or are required by law. Core vaccines have clearly demonstrable efficacy and safety, with a high enough level of patient benefit and low enough level of risk to justify their use in all equids.”

NY Trainers and horse owners should consult with their veterinarians to ensure that their horses are current on vaccinations for EEE. Unvaccinated horses are extremely susceptible to EEE infection.

Although the Equine Disease Communications Center (EDCC) has not reported any cases of horses infected by the West Nile Virus (WNV) in New York at this time, WNV is another extremely serious viral infection borne by mosquitoes.

In view of this fact and considering the recent NYSDH warnings to the general public about increased risk for mosquito-borne viral diseases in NY, owners and veterinarians are advised to consider vaccinating their horses for WNV as well.

For more information, visit the [NYS Department of Health](#).