

# Alert to Cattle and Horse Owners

## Vital Information about Vesicular Stomatitis

### Vesicular Stomatitis

Vesicular Stomatitis (VS) is a viral disease affecting horses, cattle, swine, sheep, goats, many wild animals, and occasionally humans. Infection causes vesicles (blisters) in the mouth (on the tongue, dental pad and lips), in the nostrils, on areas around the hooves and on the teats. Vesicles swell and break, exposing raw tissue. In cloven-hoofed animals, the vesicles mimic those caused by Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD), a foreign animal disease eradicated from the US in 1929. However, **FMD does not cause vesicles in horses.**



FMD and VS are clinically indistinguishable in cloven-hoofed animals. Early detection is vital in preventing the nationwide spread of FMD.

Sampling and rapid diagnosis are essential when vesicles are observed in cattle and other cloven-hoofed animals. There is no specific treatment for animals infected with VS and there are no vaccines available to prevent this disease.

### How is VS Spread?

Biting insects and animal-to-animal contact may spread the disease. An infected animal's saliva and fluid from ruptured vesicles can contaminate feed and water, spreading the disease.



### Clinical Signs

Livestock usually show clinical signs 2-8 days after exposure to the virus. The first sign is usually excessive salivation due to the vesicles in the mouth. Vesicles may also be found on the nostrils, teats and around the hooves. Animals may refuse to eat or drink and may show signs of lameness. Affected animals usually recover within two weeks.

### If You Suspect VS

Immediately notify your veterinarian or State/Federal Animal Health officials if you see signs of a vesicular disease. VS cannot be diagnosed on signs alone; sampling and laboratory testing is crucial to diagnose the vesicular condition and to differentiate it from other diseases, such as FMD.

### Outbreak in 2015

On April 29, 2015, VS was confirmed in one horse on a premises in Grant County, New Mexico. Subsequently, a horse on a premises located in Otero County, New Mexico was confirmed positive. On May 1, 2015, VS was confirmed in three horses on two premises in Maricopa County, Arizona, and in one mule on a premises in Kane County, Utah. These are the 2015 VS index cases for their respective states.

### Prevention

Even with the best defense measures, VS can still affect your herd. It is most likely to occur during the warm summer months, particularly in animals pastured along rivers and in valleys. The following are ways to help protect horses and livestock:

- Limit movement of animals from affected premises
- Apply insect control programs
- Separate animals with lesions from healthy animals
- Bring animals indoors at night to reduce their exposure to biting insects
- Use individual animal equipment or disinfect equipment between use on animals

### California Movement Restrictions

All horses, cattle, swine, sheep and goats from a state where VS has been diagnosed, or visiting an infected state and then returning to California, except those moving directly to slaughter, **must** be accompanied by a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI) that includes the statement:

***"I have examined all the animals identified on this certificate within 72 hours of shipment date and found them to be free from signs of Vesicular Stomatitis (VS). During the last thirty (30) days, these animals have not been exposed to VS nor located on a VS confirmed or a VS suspected premises."***

The **California Horse Racing Board (CHRB)** may have additional requirements on horses coming from a VS-infected area to enter race tracks and/or CHRB-approved training centers. For more information, contact CHRB at **916-263-6000**.

CDFA Animal Health Branch Offices	
Sacramento (HQ)	916-900-5002
Modesto	209-491-9350
Ontario	909-947-4462
Redding	530-225-2140
Tulare	559-685-3500
<b>USDA/APHIS/VS 916-854-3950 or 877-741-3690</b>	