



Outbreak Alert Program Helps Horse Owners Stay Informed While Traveling

As the 2014 show season approaches, horse owners should not only be thinking about their horses' training programs, but also about the ways to best protect their horses' health while traveling.

"Diseases pose a significant health risk to horses," says Megan Green, DVM, manager, Merial Large Animal Veterinary Services. "The only sure way to help prevent them is by vaccinating, but horse owners should also be aware of diseases that may be in the areas they live or are traveling to. This helps their ability to take other precautions if necessary."

Through the free Outbreak Alert program from Merial, horse owners can do just that. On the Outbreak Alert website, there are maps of the United States which highlight locations of confirmed cases of the following diseases that can impact horses:

- Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE)
- Western Equine Encephalitis
- West Nile Virus (WNV)
- Equine Herpesvirus
- Rabies
- Potomac Horse Fever

Knowing where these diseases have been reported is critical when making travel plans. For example, as of early December 2013, there had been 181 EEE cases reported in 22 states¹ and 338 cases of WNV reported in 39 different states² (for the calendar year 2013). Besides tracking diseases, the Outbreak Alert program offers a free notification system, sending emails or text messages when a disease is reported in a designated geographic area. Multiple ZIP codes can be entered for horse owners who are traveling. Since its inception in 2011, thousands of alerts have been sent out through the system.

Printable reference materials and articles about the most common equine diseases, their transmission and potential impact on a horse's health are also accessible on the Outbreak Alert site.

"We will be getting into the heart of show season very soon and horse owners should stay informed about the potential risks to their horses' health," says Green.

To sign up for the free service and learn more about equine diseases, go to www.outbreak-alert.com.

About Merial

Merial is a world-leading, innovation-driven animal health company, providing a comprehensive range of products to enhance the health, well-being and performance of a wide range of animals. Merial employs approximately 6,000 people and operates in more than 150 countries worldwide. Its 2012 sales were \$2.8 billion.

For more information, please see www.merial.com.

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¹United States Department of Agriculture. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Available at:

www.aphis.gov/vs/nahss/ee/2013_eastern_equine_encephalitis_report_updated_12062013.pdf. Accessed January 28, 2014.

²United States Department of Agriculture. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Available at:

www.aphis.gov/vs/nahss/equine/wnv/2013_equine_wnv_report_updated_12062013.pdf. Accessed January 28, 2014.