



Two Infectious Diseases of Importance for Summer of 2020: VSV and RHDV2

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Vesicular Stomatitis: As of May 14, 2020 APHIS USDA reports that Vesicular Stomatitis (VSV) has been identified in horses in Arizona, Texas and New Mexico and in Texas cattle. It is very likely to be in Colorado soon. To keep abreast of the 2020 outbreak visit the Vesicular Stomatitis websites at USDA/APHIS and Colorado Department of Agriculture.

Because disease spread becomes a higher risk when animals (and people) gather for fairs and competitions, there are guidelines issued by the Office of the State Veterinarian that describe actions competition organizers can take to decrease risk of Vesicular Stomatitis spread (<https://www.colorado.gov/aganimals/vesicular-stomatitis-virus-vsv>).

It is important to understand VSV to prevent misinformation. Colorado county fairs, rodeos, and livestock shows occur primarily July through September when the VS virus is generally most active. In the intermountain west VSV outbreaks often begin in Mexico, move north through Texas, Oklahoma, Arizona, New Mexico and into Colorado. Generally, VSV will affect a lot of animals, primarily horses, but few will die from the disease. The pattern will vary depending on the virus serotype causing the outbreak in livestock (primarily horses, cattle, hogs, camelids). The three primary routes of transmission are (1) fomites (objects that can carry the infectious virus like clothes, shoes, tack, buckets, pitchforks), (2) animal to animal contact, and (3) insect vectors, primarily *Culicoides* midges, black flies and sand flies. The clinical signs of VSV resemble other vesicular diseases in cattle (foot and mouth disease) and hogs (swine vesicular diseases), thus cases result in regulatory intervention and can have significant negative effect on production in commercial herds.

When Vesicular Stomatitis is first suspected in a county, the State Veterinarian's Office must be called to request that a Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostician (FADD) perform an investigation and gather samples. Once VSV is confirmed in a Colorado county, subsequent cases in horses may be quarantined with a presumptive diagnosis of VSV or the owner can request a sample be collected by an accredited veterinarian to confirm. The owner will pay for the testing. Lesions suspicious of VSV in hogs and cattle must be diagnosed by samples collected by a FADD as described above. Two types of testing are done: Testing the blood for virus-specific antibodies or by testing swabs from the lesions to identify the presence of the virus. Testing is necessary to identify the cause of the lesions ruling out other infectious diseases of consequence or the possibility that the lesions are caused by photosensitivity (sunburn), irritating feeds or weeds, or toxicity from non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications like phenylbutazone. It can take 2 to 4 days to get results back and it is important to have a certified DVM to do the testing. Because of the timing of both the disease and the test results, it is not advisable to require a test prior to your fair/show.

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If animals are examined only prior to entering the fair/show grounds, the responsible parties at the fair/show should be clear about who is the final decision making authority on allowing animals onto the grounds. Accuracy of visual lesion inspection is not perfect and some 4-H families are contesting that lesion identification is due to VSV.

New to Colorado in 2020: Rabbit Hemorrhagic Diarrheal Disease (RHDV2)

RHDV2 is also classified as a Foreign Animal Disease meaning one that is not normally within the United States and must be reported to the State Veterinarian if suspected for a FADD investigation. It was diagnosed in wild cottontails on islands off Washington State in 2019. During the spring of 2020 the disease has now been diagnosed in Arizona, Texas, New Mexico, and recently in wild rabbits in 3 counties in Colorado. Pet and show rabbit owners are understandably worried. Below are links to reliable sources of information concerning the spread of the disease and biosecurity protocols to limit spread. This is an evolving situation so concerned individuals should follow reliable sources of information to stay appraised.

Helpful Links on RHDV-2:

https://cpw.state.co.us/Documents/Wildlife-Health/Rabbit_Hemorrhagic_Disease.pdf

http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/rabbit_hemorrhagic_disease.pdf

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/fs-rhdv2.pdf

<https://www.colorado.gov/aganimals/rabbit-hemorrhagic-disease-virus-rhdv2>

[Cleaning and Disinfecting for RHDV2](#)

[Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Biosecurity Recommendations](#)

[Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease FAQs](#)

[Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease - USDA](#)

[Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease - CFSPH](#)

[Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease - OIE](#)

[RHDV Emerging Risk Notice 10-19](#)

Press Releases:

[Joint Media Press Release - Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease](#)

[Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Confirmed in Cottontails in Costilla County, Colorado](#)

[Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Confirmed in AZ, NM, and TX](#)

[New Mexico RHDV Updates](#)

[Arizona RHDV Updates](#)

[Texas RHDV Updates](#)