



Notice to Industry

CONTAGIOUS EQUINE METRITIS IMPORT REQUIREMENTS REMAIN IN EFFECT

OTTAWA, March 10, 2010 – The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is reminding the Canadian equine industry that import requirements introduced in 2009 in response to an outbreak of contagious equine metritis (CEM) in the United States (U.S.) remain in effect. The requirements cover the certification of equine germplasm (semen and embryos) and live horses from the U.S.

Canada is currently free of CEM. In order to maintain this status, import restrictions on animals from the U.S. must remain in place until the U.S. is deemed free of CEM by the CFIA. At this time, testing and treatment protocols are still ongoing in 17 states. The CFIA continues to closely monitor the situation in the U.S. and will update the import requirements when appropriate.

In Canada, CEM is a reportable disease under the *Health of Animals Regulations*, so all cases must be reported to the CFIA. If *anyone* suspects a case of CEM, they must report it to the CFIA for immediate investigation.

If CEM is found in Canada, the policy is to eradicate the disease. Eradication involves implementing disease control measures such as:

- quarantines,
- movement restrictions,
- testing of exposed horses, and
- treatment of infected horses.

In addition, horses would be required to undergo significantly more stringent export testing before moving outside the country.

CEM is a transmissible venereal disease in horses. It is caused by a bacterium called *Taylorella equigenitalis*. It is highly contagious, spread primarily through reproductive activities. It can have a devastating effect on equine reproductive activity. Stallions carrying the disease can spread infection through semen that has been collected for artificial insemination. This route of transmission can spread the infection from a just few horses to many more. This disease occurs naturally only in horses, and all breeds are susceptible.

CEM can be transmitted indirectly to mares and stallions via contaminated instruments and equipment such as:

- devices used for artificial insemination
- tail bandages
- buckets
- sponges
- gloves

To prevent the disease from spreading, it is important to maintain strict hygiene when handling breeding mares and stallions.

For more information, please visit www.inspection.gc.ca or call 1-800-442-2342.

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For information:
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The logo for Canada, featuring the word "Canada" in a serif font with a small Canadian flag icon above the letter "a".