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NEWS RELEASE

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West Nile Virus Confirmed in Horses in Kansas

MANHATTAN, Kansas — The Kansas Department of Agriculture Division of Animal Health has received notification of multiple confirmed cases of West Nile virus (WNV) in horses across the state over the past few weeks. Confirmed cases have been reported in Barber, Butler, Douglas and Pratt counties.

WNV is a preventable disease, with annual vaccinations that have proven highly effective. All of the confirmed cases of WNV in Kansas were in unvaccinated horses or horses with an unknown vaccination history so were assumed to be unvaccinated. All horse owners should consult with their local veterinarians and make a vaccination plan for their horses.

WNV is a virus that can infect humans, horses, birds and other species. Horses infected with WNV can have symptoms that range from depression, loss of appetite and fever to severe neurologic signs such as incoordination, weakness, inability to rise, and hypersensitivity to touch or sound. WNV can be fatal in horses. If you see symptoms of WNV in your horse, contact your veterinarian immediately.

The virus is carried and transmitted by mosquitoes; it is not directly contagious from horse to horse or from horse to human. WNV is a reportable disease in Kansas, which means veterinarians are required by law to report any confirmed cases to the State Veterinarian.

For more information about West Nile virus or other animal disease issues in Kansas, go to the KDA Division of Animal Health website at agriculture.ks.gov/AnimalDiseases.

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