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NEWS RELEASE

October 24, 2019

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KDA Confirms Vesicular Stomatitis in Horses in Sherman County

MANHATTAN, Kan. — The Kansas Department of Agriculture has announced that vesicular stomatitis virus (VSV) was confirmed in horses in Sherman County on October 23, 2019. Kansas becomes the eighth state in the U.S. to have confirmed cases of VSV this year.

The infected horses all reside on the same premises, which is a private residence, and no animal movement has occurred on or off that premises for more than three weeks. KDA has quarantined the livestock on the affected premises, and there is no known exposure to other animals.

“Protecting the health and safety of horses and other livestock in Kansas is our highest priority,” said Dr. Justin Smith, Animal Health Commissioner. “We encourage all livestock owners to be aware and follow best practices to limit exposure to insects. We also advise owners to take extra precautions with animals that may be comingling with other animals.”

VSV is a viral disease which primarily affects horses, but can also affect cattle, sheep, goats, swine, llamas and alpacas. The disease is characterized by fever and the formation of blister-like lesions in the mouth and on the dental pad, tongue, lips, nostrils, ears, hooves and teats. Infected animals may refuse to eat and drink, which can lead to weight loss. Vesicular stomatitis can be painful for infected animals and costly to their owners. Humans can also become infected with the disease when handling affected animals, and can develop flu-like symptoms.

The primary way the virus is transmitted is from biting insects like black flies, sand flies and midges. Owners should institute aggressive measures to reduce flies and other insects where animals are housed. VSV can also be spread by nose-to-nose contact between animals. The virus itself usually runs its course in five to seven days, and it can take up to an additional seven days for the infected animal to recover from the symptoms. Premises with animals

diagnosed with VSV are quarantined until at least 14 days after the last affected animal is diagnosed. There are no USDA-approved vaccines for VSV.

VSV is considered a reportable disease in Kansas. Any person who suspects their animals may have VSV should contact their local veterinarian or state animal health official.

When VSV was confirmed in neighboring states this summer, KDA implemented increased importation requirements from the affected regions to help prevent the spread of VSV into Kansas. Because of the confirmed case in Kansas, other states are likely to increase restrictions on livestock imports. Animal health officials strongly encourage all livestock owners and veterinarians to call the animal health authority in the destination state for the most current import requirements prior to travel.

For more information about VSV, including documents outlining symptoms, fly control practices, and current situation reports, please visit the KDA website at www.agriculture.ks.gov/VSV. If you have specific questions or are seeing suspicious lesions on your animals, please contact the KDA Division of Animal Health at 785-564-6601.

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