

Herpesvirus Biosecurity

Paul Lunn, BVMS, MS, PhD, head of the Department of Clinical Sciences at Colorado State University's College of Veterinary Medicine, spoke on herpesvirus biosecurity at a meeting hosted by the C.L. Davis Foundation and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians on Equine Herpesviral Diseases. The meeting was sponsored by Fort Dodge Animal Health and was held just prior to the start of the December 2007 convention of the American Association of Equine Practitioners.

Key Strategies

"Strategies for prevention of equine herpesvirus myeloencephalopathy (EHM, neurologic equine herpesvirus) are the same as those for preventing any EHV-1 infection," stated Lunn. "Biosecurity measures are likely to be of the greatest value, and no vaccine has convincing evidence of its ability to prevent or ameliorate an EHM outbreak.

"The use of vaccines to reduce viral shedding in conventional EHV-1 infections will have some value," he added. "Vaccination in the face of an EHM outbreak may be used in unaffected horses in an attempt to prevent further spread of infection. There remains concern in the view of some clinicians that vaccination may facilitate development of EHM, but at present evidence for this is lacking."

The main biosecurity measures Lunn cited to prevent EHM are entry restrictions of horses onto properties, quarantine at the time of entry, use of health certificates, breaking up the horse population on a property into smaller groups to prevent spread if infection does occur, and vaccination. He said horses today are like people; they travel and they mix with new populations just like we do in our lives.

"Recent entry of horses to a premises, and especially return of resident horses from an event or show, especially during the 'at risk' season (late fall through early spring) are strongly associated with EHM outbreaks," said Lunn. "Therefore, quarantining such horses and monitoring for fever is a valuable strategy for preventing an outbreak."

During the Outbreak

Lunn said early recognition of EHV-1, even a single EHM case, should trigger implementation of measures designed to limit spread of infection. He recommended that owners and veterinarians follow the AAEP guidelines that are available to everyone, not just members, at its Web site (www.aaep.org/vaccination_guidelines.htm).

Rusty Ford, equine program manager for the Kentucky State Veterinarian's office who was in the audience, said, "We in Kentucky do believe effective biosecurity works. Recently at Churchill Downs (Thoroughbred racetrack), biosecurity worked because horsemen know about biosecurity. They know the hose shouldn't sit in a bucket (touching it and, therefore, potentially spreading disease), the hose is held over bucket.

"Effective biosecurity comes with a price tag," Ford continued. "I believe our last outbreak at Turfway (another Thoroughbred racetrack) cost \$2,500 per day for biosecurity. Common areas of concern are horses and people who have contact with the racehorses, such as starting gate crews, regulatory vets, outriders, and lead ponies."

When questioned about how horse trainers and others reacted to the strict biosecurity measures, Ford said, "Things are easier now because we demonstrated measures practiced as routine (that) have proven benefit in reducing the amount of time we are under restrictions."

Lunn rased the question: What factors are



CHAD MENDELL

Enforce entry restrictions of horses onto your property. Any visiting horse should be put into quarantine and observed for any signs of fever.



LEE THOMAS

Vaccination in the face of an EHM outbreak might be used in unaffected horses in an attempt to prevent further spread of infection.



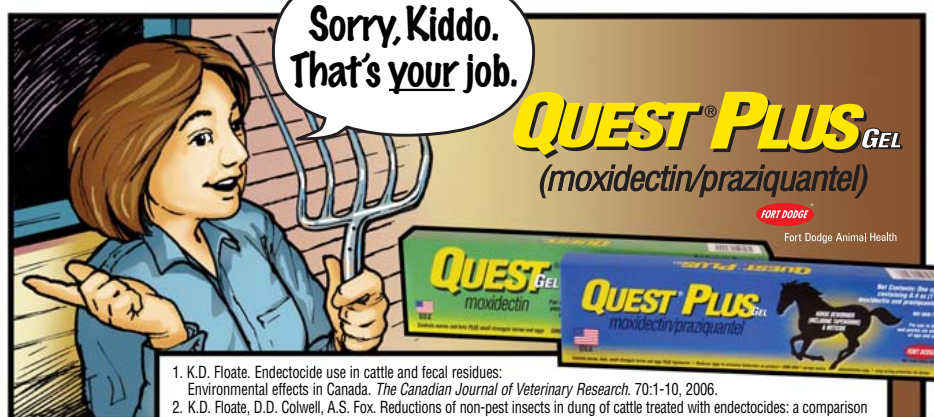
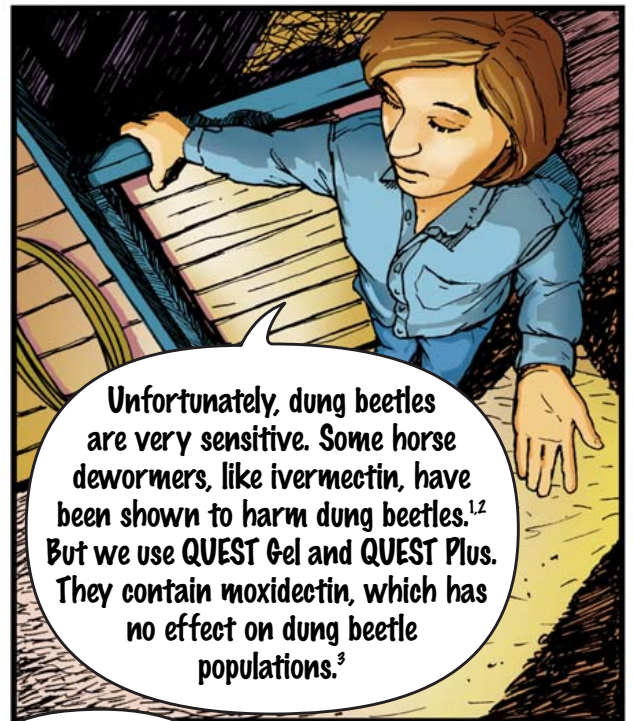
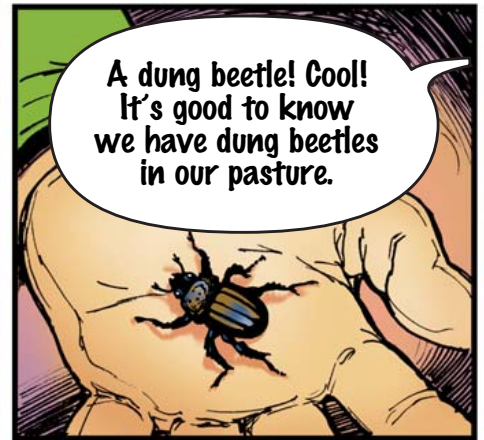
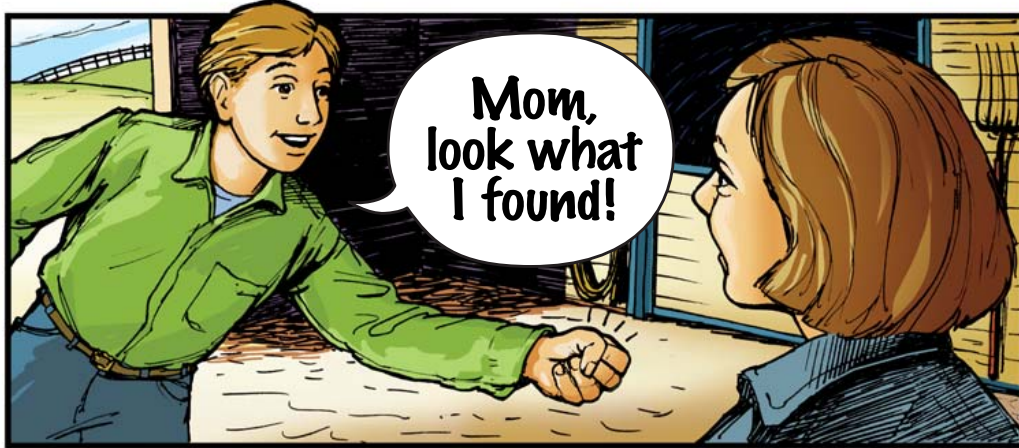
CHAD MENDELL

When filling up water buckets and tanks, hold the hose over the bucket, not in or touching the bucket, to prevent spreading disease from bucket to bucket.

associated with an EHM outbreak?

"We have no clue how one EHV exposure results in trivial disease and another results in outbreak," said Lunn.

He said the dearth of information on this aspect makes it hard for veterinarians to advise owners during an outbreak. 🐾



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 2. K.D. Floate, D.D. Colwell, A.S. Fox. Reductions of non-pest insects in dung of cattle treated with endectocides: a comparison of four products. *Bulletin of Entomological Research*. 92:471-481, 2002.
 3. Data on file, Fort Dodge Animal Health.