

Research Promises New Way to Fight Equine Herpes Virus

Ithaca, N.Y. -- Cornell University researchers are developing a new way to help horses fight equine herpes virus.

Margaret Brosnahan, DVM, MS, Dipl. ACVIM, a post-doctoral graduate student at Cornell, shared the research at the American Association of Equine Practitioners meeting in Las Vegas.

Small interfering RNA (siRNA) was injected nasally into 10 horses 12 hours before and 12 hours after a nasal injection of equine herpesvirus EHV-1). Four other horses received an injection of EHV-1 as well as injections of siRNA that targeted an uninvolved gene.

Researchers hoped to see significantly less viral shedding from the virus in the blood. They didn't. But clinical symptoms and results were much better, with horses less sick and fewer horses needing to be euthanized after neurological symptoms proved too painful and debilitating.

"The whole virus is clearly a lot more complicated," Brosnahan says. "We saw improvement in clinical signs, in lessening mortality rates, but we didn't see improvement in the intermediate steps of decreasing viral replication." Researchers suspect individual horses' immune system may be influencing the effects of the siRNA on the virus. "The exciting thing about this is siRNA did something good. We're just not sure what," she says.

If siRNA makes its way into an equine medical product, it would fill a gap in the fight against equine herpes virus between vaccination and treatment. "It'll never be the silver bullet to end equine herpesvirus," Brosnahan says. "We envision a product used right before an outbreak, where one horse is sick and other horses have been in contact."

Data from a larger study at Cornell using different doses of siRNA is being examined now, Brosnahan says.

Welcome New Members

**Brian Evans
Lois Cahall
Bonnie Crockett
Rebecca Parmenter
Tammy Severson**



**Next Meeting
of the
Delaware
Equine Council
Monday, June 21, 2010
7 p.m.
Harrington
Public Library
Harrington, Delaware**

IMPORTANT ALERT!

Intervet Schering-Plough announces PreveNile® West Nile Virus vaccine recall

Intervet Schering-Plough has announced an urgent recall of all serial numbers of PreveNile® West Nile Virus vaccine for horses due to an increased number of adverse event reports associated with the use of these vaccines. According to a letter distributed by the manufacturer, the USDA has been alerted of this recall.