

New restrictions for equine imports into Canada in response to reported cases of CEM in United states.

The bacteria (*Taylorella equigenitalis*) that causes Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM) was isolated from a Quarter Horse stallion during routine export testing at a Kentucky breeding facility in December 2008. A total of **18 stallions** have now been confirmed as positive for *T. equigenitalis* (4 in Kentucky, 3 in Indiana, 3 in Illinois, 1 in Texas, 1 in Georgia and 6 in Wisconsin). So far five mares have been found positive, one in Wisconsin, 2 in Illinois and 2 in California. None of the positive horses have yet been identified as the source of the outbreak, so the epidemiologic investigation continues.

For the latest news on the CEM outbreak, visit the USDA website:
http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/hot_issues/cem/index.shtml

The discovery of CEM in the United States will impact the 2009 breeding season. Breeding facilities may require negative CEM cultures prior to the arrival of mares or stallions and foreign countries may revise their import requirements for equine semen. The first country to publish new regulations regarding CEM as a result of this outbreak is Canada.

Canadian mare owners wishing to breed to a US stallion must now apply for an import permit from the CFIA.

Canadian import permit information:
http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/heasan/import/permit_covere.shtml

The semen shipment, whether cooled or frozen, must also be accompanied with a health certificate endorsed by a USDA veterinarian. The health certificate certifies that the stallion has not been on a premises where *Taylorella equigenitalis* has been isolated 60 days immediately preceding the collection of semen for export to Canada or a premises currently under quarantine or investigation for CEM. In addition the health certificate denotes that the semen was processed with an extender that contains antibiotics effective against *T. equigenitalis* and is shipped in individual receptacles or straws, each marked with the collection date, identity of the donor and the semen collection premises.

The CFIA announced that effective April 29th 2009, an alternative procedure for the importation of fresh equine semen from the United States into Canada is available. The original protocol required that after collection the stallion owner/courier had to take the health certificate to the USDA for endorsement before the semen could be shipped. The closest USDA office may be hours away and many require appointments be made in advance. This resulted in shipping delays, compromising the limited lifespan of cooled semen.

The alternative procedure will enable cooled semen to be shipped to the Canadian border while simultaneously sending the original health certificate to the USDA for endorsement. The USDA office can then fax the endorsed health certificate to the CFIA where it will be matched against a copy of the non-endorsed health certificate accompanying the semen shipment. The cooled semen shipment will not clear the Canadian border until all paperwork has been approved by CFIA. Importers using this alternative procedure will be charged \$35/shipment for document verification by the CFIA. The importer will need a CFIA client account or credit card on file at the CFIA.

This alternative option only applies to fresh equine semen. The importation of frozen equine semen and embryos from the United States must continue to follow the procedure put in place on January 30, 2009.

For more information on the requirements for shipping semen to Canada visit:
http://www.horse.on.ca/news/2009_press_releases/revised_import_procedures_for_fresh_equine_semen_imports_from_the_united_states.html

For further information on CEM, TheHorse.com is a great source:

Review Article:

<http://www.thehorse.com/ViewArticle.aspx?ID=460>

Testing and Treatment protocol videos:

<http://www.thehorse.com/ViewArticle.aspx?ID=13441>

CEM culture and diagnosis:

<http://www.thehorse.com/ViewArticle.aspx?ID=13422>

Video interview with Dr. Peter Timoney covering the basics of CEM:

<http://www.thehorse.com/Video.aspx?vID=153>