



September, 2020

Eastern Equine Encephalitis found in Barry County horse

The Barry-Eaton District Health Department was notified on Thursday, September 3, of a horse in Barry County that had died from Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). The horse became ill on August 26, 2020. This is the first confirmed animal case of EEE in Barry County this year. No other animal or human cases of EEE have been confirmed in Eaton or Barry County at this time, however 13 confirmed cases in horses in five Michigan counties have been reported to date. Because conditions are favorable for EEE-carrying mosquitoes at this time of year, people living or visiting in Barry or Eaton Counties should take precautions against mosquito bites.

EEE cannot be spread between animals or between animals and humans, but humans can get EEE through the bite of an infected mosquito. Most (95-96%) cases of human EEE do not cause any symptoms, and less than 1% develop serious illness. However, EEE is potentially serious and symptoms include fever, weakness, and muscle and joint pain. More severe illness can cause swelling of the brain and surrounding tissues. Anyone can be affected by EEE, but persons over age 60 and under age 15 are at greatest risk for developing severe disease.

If you plan to spend time outdoors, BEDHD encourages residents to continue to protect themselves from mosquito bites by:

- Avoiding being outdoors from dusk to dawn when mosquitos that carry the EEE virus are most active.
- Applying insect repellents that contain the active ingredient DEET, or other U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-registered product to exposed skin or clothing, and always follow the manufacturer's directions for use.
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors. Apply insect repellent to clothing to help prevent bites.
- Maintaining window and door screening to help keep mosquitoes outside.
- Emptying water from mosquito breeding sites around the home, such as buckets, unused kiddie pools, old tires or similar sites where mosquitoes may lay eggs.
- Using nets and/or fans over outdoor eating areas.

More information about EEE can be found at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services website: <https://bit.ly/3IGQC3k> .

Additionally, domestic horses can be vaccinated for EEE through your veterinarian. If you see an animal that is exhibiting strange behavior or appears sick, avoid handling or consuming the animal and visit <https://secure1.state.mi.us/ORS/Home> to report your observation. For questions regarding sick domestic animals such as horses, livestock, or pets, contact the Michigan Department of Agriculture at 517-373-1077.