

# Equine Infektiöse Anämie (EIA) in Irland

Die Irish Thoroughbred Breeders' Association (ITBA) informierte ihre Mitglieder Anfang Oktober mit untenstehendem Text über die aktuelle Situation zur EIA in Irland.

Er findet sich auf der homepage des irischen Landwirtschaftsdepartements ([http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/printindex.jsp?file=animal\\_health/EIA/EIA.xml](http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/printindex.jsp?file=animal_health/EIA/EIA.xml))

## **Equine Infectious Anaemia (EIA) / Update - 3 October 2006**

The Department has now confirmed twenty-five cases of Equine Infectious Anaemia, the most recent on 29 September. The cases continue to be concentrated, with some exceptions, in the Meath/Kildare/Dublin area. All but three of the cases confirmed to date have been in thoroughbred horses.

Following the confirmation of the first case, a strict control regime was put in place to contain and eradicate the disease, involving restricting the movement of horses, surveillance and testing of horses under restriction.

The Department has now imposed movement restrictions on over 30 premises, including a number of which are contiguous to premises on which cases of EIA were confirmed. In excess of 1100 horses have been subjected to movement restriction, the majority of them on their home premises where they are isolated from contact with other horses on the premises.

Approximately 120 individual horse restrictions have now been removed following the satisfactory completion of the prescribed ninety-day restriction period and having tested negative on any occasion sampled. While it is anticipated that the ninety-day period will continue to be the normal period for which restrictions will remain in place, the Department will, in a small number of high-risk cases, extend that period and continue the surveillance programme before the restrictions are lifted. In no circumstances will the Department lift restrictions before the ninety-day restriction period has elapsed. Nonetheless, it is anticipated that the rate of de-restriction will accelerate through this month and over the next number of months. To date no premises restriction has been lifted.

The Department is continuing to schedule tests for those horses placed under restriction, the frequency of which is determined by reference to a risk-assessment in each case. In respect of these tests, the Department is making a financial contribution to the costs of the veterinary practitioner taking the blood sample(s) and the Department is also meeting the cost of the analysis of the sample(s) by the Irish Equine Centre.

In addition, the Department has decided to extend the surveillance programme to an identified group of some 3000 horses, principally in the Co. Meath area. The owners of such horses are being written to and in each case laboratory costs associated with analysis will be met by the Department. A specific team of veterinary inspectors from the Department is being assembled and will be tasked to sample the horses included in the programme. This programme may be extended in due course. Any horse owner in the area (or elsewhere) whose horse shows any clinical symptoms suggestive of EIA should immediately contact their private veterinary practitioner and have arrangements made to have the horse sampled and the sample analysed for the disease.

Of the twenty-five cases confirmed to date, twenty can be associated to the initial outbreaks, including those in the equine hospital in June. The Department is now satisfied, based on the significant epidemiological data gathered to date, that there are veterinary linkages in at least four of the remaining cases. Epidemiological investigation of the most recently confirmed case is continuing.

In view of this apparent veterinary association in some of the cases, the Department is reiterating the advice, consistently given over the past three months, that veterinary practitioners should, at all times, observe the highest standards of hygiene and should ensure that, in all circumstances, contaminated veterinary instruments are either appropriately disposed of or thoroughly sterilised (autoclaved) before reuse. The Department is making arrangements to meet the profession to re-emphasise this advice.

The Irish Equine Centre (IEC) has, since mid-June, analysed in excess of 10,000 samples, many of which were required for entry to the recent sales, and to date only the twenty-five confirmed cases have been positive. The Department wishes to express its ongoing gratitude for the expeditious and professional manner in which the IEC has dealt with this significantly increased workload. The Department's Central Veterinary Research Laboratory is also undertaking serological testing.

The Department is continuing to progress its investigation into the circumstances in which the disease was first introduced into the country. This investigation is a comprehensive one and the Department will, in the event of sufficient evidence being established, endeavour to pursue a prosecution. Because of the nature of the investigation, the Department is not in a position to comment any further on its progress.

The Department is, as it has from the outset, treating this outbreak very seriously and is continuing to devote such resources as are considered necessary to contain and eradicate the disease. The Department appreciates the value and prestige of the Irish bloodstock industry and is continuing to work close with the various elements of the industry, including the breeding, racing and sales sectors. The Department is committed to ensuring that it communicates comprehensively and frequently with both the thoroughbred and non-thoroughbred sectors and the wider industry, including the veterinary profession, and appreciates the very high level of co-operation and assistance provided by all those involved in the Irish equine industry.

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