

## Highlights of Equine '98 Study Results: *Part IV*

The USDA's National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) designed the Equine '98 Study to provide both participants and the equine industry with information on the United States' equine population for education and research purposes.

This report is based on the second phase of Equine '98 data collection done by Federal and State Veterinary Medical Officers (VMO's) and Animal Health Technicians (AHT's) in 28 states.<sup>1</sup> From June 15 through September 11, 1998, data were collected on-farm on horse management and health from 1,136 participating operations that had three or more horses present on January 1, 1998. This target population was estimated to represent:

- 51.6 percent of operations with horses in the 28 states.
- 83.9 percent of horses in the 28 states.

Race tracks were not included in this phase of the study.

More detailed information on the study and the sampling methodology is available in NAHMS Equine '98 tabular summary reports. All Equine '98 reports are posted on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ceah/cahm>. The following information was excerpted from the fourth tabular summary report, *Part IV: Reference of Health Management for Horses and Highlighted Disease, 1998*.

### General Management

- ◆ The majority (94.0 percent) of operations provided resident horses access to pasture in 1998. The percentages were similar across regions.
- ◆ For operations with pasture, 22.3 percent of operations had less than half of the pasture covered with edible vegetation, as reported by owners/operators. Over 50 percent of the operations indicated that three-fourths or more of the pasture area had edible vegetation during the summer of 1998.
- ◆ Overall, over 50 percent of operations with pasture access for horses had surface water, such as a stream, lake, pond, irrigation ditch, in the pasture itself.
- ◆ The ground where the majority of resident horses stood most of the time in 1998 was usually wet or wet about half the time for more than 50 percent of operations. Wet ground was defined as damp or muddy ground that didn't necessarily have a lot of standing water puddles.
- ◆ Over 50 percent of operations in the Northeast indicated horses rarely had access to sand or dirt while eating, while over 50 percent of operations in other regions indicated that horses sometimes or most of the time had access to dirt or sand while eating. Regional differences in where horses were fed (e.g., stalls vs. pasture) may account for this finding).
- ◆ Salt, such as salt block or loose salt, was available for horses on the majority (93.7 percent) of operations.

<sup>1</sup> Alabama, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

## **Breeding Management**

◆ Approximately one-third of operations had resident stallions. Of the operations with stallions, just under one-half (47.6 percent) used one or more of these stallions for breeding purposes in the previous 12 months.

◆ Of the operations that used stallions for breeding in the previous 12 months, only 3.0 percent shipped semen within the U.S. and 0.1 percent shipped semen internationally.

## **Equine Viral Arteritis**

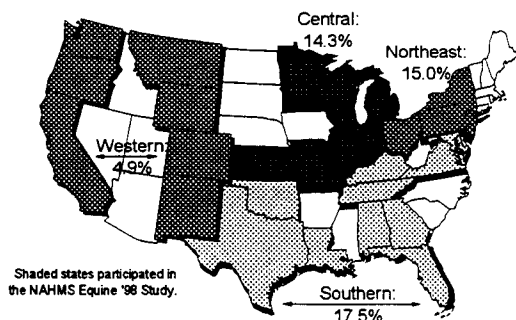
◆ Overall, 59.4 percent of operations had never heard of equine viral arteritis (EVA), while 13.0 percent knew some basics or were knowledgeable of the disease (Figure 1). The Western region had the lowest percentage (4.9 percent) of operations that knew some basics or were knowledgeable of EVA. The percentage of operations that knew some basics or were knowledgeable regarding EVA increased with size of operation.

◆ The percentages of operations that were familiar with EVA were highest in the racing (31.9 percent) and breeding (31.3 percent) categories of primary horse use and lowest (2.3 percent) in the farm/ranch category. Additional categories were pleasure, showing/competition (not betting), and other uses.

◆ Familiarity with EVA was higher for operations where at least 50 percent of the resident horse herd was Thoroughbreds and/or Standardbreds compared to those with primarily Quarter Horses or other breeds.

◆ Overall, only 1.6 percent of operations vaccinated at least one resident horse against EVA.

Figure 1  
**Percent of Operations that Knew Some Basics or Were Knowledgeable About EVA by Region, 1997**



Just over 1 percent of operations with fewer than 20 horses vaccinated at least one horse against EVA compared to 7.5 percent of operations with 20 or more horses.

◆ The largest percentages of operations vaccinating against EVA were those where the primary use of horses was for breeding (7.0 percent) and racing (5.4 percent). The lowest percentage (0.1 percent) was for those operations where the primary use of horses was farming or ranching.

◆ Overall, only 0.9 percent of operations indicated they had tested any horses for EVA in the previous 12 months. The percentage of operations that tested for EVA increased with size of operation.

◆ Just over 1 percent of operations with breeding stallions indicated they tested all of these stallions for equine viral arteritis (EVA), and 0.4 percent of operations had stallions enrolled in a state EVA control program.

◆ Over 88 percent of operations had resident mares in the previous 12 months, although not all operations used these mares for breeding purposes. For operations with mares, 42.3 percent used one or more of these mares for breeding purposes in the previous 12 months. Only 5.5 percent of operations that bred one or more resident mares sometimes or always required the stallion to be tested or vaccinated for equine viral arteritis (EVA).

## **Vesicular Stomatitis Virus**

◆ Overall, approximately two-thirds of operations had never heard of vesicular stomatitis (VSV). Recognition levels were similar across regions. Familiarity with VSV increased with increasing size of operation.

For more information on NAHMS or the Equine '98 Study, contact:

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