

Horse News and Views



- ◆ During the second half of 2002, there was an increase in the number of horses reported with neurological signs. In Ontario, 107 cases were confirmed with West Nile virus encephalitis (WNV). A number of diseases share the same neurological signs of progressive ataxia (weakness), excitability, blindness, and somnolence (sleepiness). These diseases include Eastern and Western encephalitis, rabies, equine protozoal myeloencephalitis (EPM), neurological form of herpes virus, and wobblers.
- ◆ Last month, we emphasized the importance of maintaining biosecurity on the farm and ensuring that new animals do not bring with them diseases such as swamp fever (equine infectious anemia) and strangles. This warning was re-emphasized after viewing a recent submission to the Ontario Veterinary College. A horse was brought to Ontario from Alberta that was heavily infested with moose ticks. This is an unusual finding and poses no threat. However, it emphasizes how easily parasites and diseases can be quickly transported across large stretches of the country.
- ◆ This is the time of year to be thinking about fertilizing your pastures and hay fields. Yearly nitrogen application should be split into ½ in the early spring, 1/4 in late June and 1/4 in early September. A minimum of 75 kg of actual nitrogen per hectare is needed to improve pastures and hay fields. Under grazing conditions, a valuable indicator of the need for nitrogen is the appearance of better and greener growth around urine and manure spots. Soil test your paddocks and pastures to determine the fertility level of these nutrients. For further information see the information sheet Managing Horse Pastures.
<http://www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA/english/livestock/horses/facts/pasture2.htm>

For further information contact Dr. Bob Wright (519) 846-3412 or visit our website: <http://www.gov.on.ca/omafra/english/livestock>



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Horse News and Views is prepared by
Dr. Bob Wright, Veterinary Science,
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food,
Wellington Place, R.R. #1, Fergus, Ontario N1M 2W3
Telephone: 519-846-3412 Fax: 519-846-8101
Email: robert.wright@omaf.gov.on.ca

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